





CURRY ARTS JOURNAL
Curry College's Journal
of Writing and Art since 1973

40th

ANNIVERSARY



Krista Seinau, "Untitled," Glazed Stoneware
First appeared in *Curry Arts Journal* 2007.

Curry Arts Journal 2013

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Dear Readers,

Welcome to *Curry Arts Journal 2013*, our fortieth anniversary edition! To celebrate this important milestone, we have expanded our offering of undergraduate writing to include new work by alumni and reprints of previously published *Curry Arts Journal* selections. Reading through forty years of essays, poems, stories, and plays, we have assembled a collection to treasure and share, both in print and on our new website. Since these pieces remember people, places, and times and also speak to universals in our present lives, we have interspersed them amongst new selections to keep a conversation going back and forth between the decades. As a group, these writings on love, war, death, sex, and other themes large and small are packed with Curry authors' insights into the human heart and mind. We will leave it to you to see how and welcome your comments on individual pieces as well as the whole.

Through the selection process, we not only gained a window into the constants and changes in undergraduate life but also in the life of the journal. For a sense of the journal's history, we lead you to our cover, which is itself an assemblage of past covers. The inaugural edition in Winter 1973 was an 8 ½" x 5 ½" booklet with a purple textured cover and *The Curry Arts Journal* and the date centered in two lines at the bottom. This format continued until 1976 when a white cover with red and blue lettering and "Spring 1976" in a circular design appeared. This edition was the first to contain a line drawing within its pages, and line drawings and black and white photographs appeared in editions thereafter. Simpler covers and a name change to *The Journal* ended the 1970s.

The 1980s saw another name change to *Currents*. These covers became fanciful with drawings of what appear to be Mother Nature (1981), Pandora's box (1982), and a collage of newsprint and current slogans, such as "no nukes" and "yesterday sex was dirty and the air was clean" (1983). The 1985, 1986, and 1988 editions appeared as *Serenade*, marking another name change. That the 1985 edition contained the first images of computer graphics is noteworthy; called "computer bugs," they depict insects with pixels.

In 1990, the journal published an edition in 8 ½" x 11" format titled *Arts Journal* with "Curry College" printed below. (An undated edition, possibly from 1980, with an ink drawing of a typewriter on the front, was also published in the larger format.) Returning to the 8 ½" x 5 ½" booklet in 1991, the editors titled the edition *CAJ* and followed with *Curry*

Arts Journal. The mid-90s saw a return to solid-colored textured covers with CAJ embossed within an oval design. The journal has remained *Curry Arts Journal/CAJ* ever since.

During the 2000s and into the present decade, the journal's design has benefitted from improvements in printing technology. In the 2001 edition, digital prints first appeared in color, and the inclusion of artwork photographed and printed in color has continued to the present day. The 2012 edition saw a move to a 7 ½" x 9 ½" format and a more creative design, with art pieces both complementing the literary offerings and appearing in spreads of their own. The larger format gave us more breathing space for text as well as more opportunities for pages with creative combinations of artwork and text. The *CAJ* logo developed last year remains with us in this year's edition, and we hope to feature it for many years to come, both in print and on the web.

On the literary side of things, the creation of the *Curry Arts Journal* Practicum course in 2003 allowed students to play a more sustained and proactive role in the journal's editorial process. Meeting for two-and-a-half hours per week to select and edit submissions and plan events proved a collaborative adventure. We made it up as we went along, looking to other undergraduate literary arts journals for features to incorporate into our publication. In this way, we generated many improvements including the addition of editors' and contributors' notes sections and the creation of submission forms.

While the majority of the students who enrolled in the Practicum were interested in careers in writing, editing, or publishing, others simply saw it as an opportunity to work on a literary arts project that was important to the Curry community. Many *CAJ* alums have reported applying the writing, revision, editing, critical thinking, and mentoring skills they practiced to satisfying careers in a variety of fields. In 2008 Jonathan Reinhart, a former *CAJ* Practicum editor who is now employed as a librarian, wrote: "I find myself using my experiences evaluating submissions for the journal most often in my role as a library trustee. Every year we have to review our director and I think back to determining what entries would and would not be published in the journal." More recently Reinhart described how he has applied the Practicum's evaluation process to his podcasting and blogging endeavors. He wrote: "Game designers reach out to me offering promotional copies of their products for me to review. When I accept a review copy [...] I do my best to provide a fair and accurate review, without being too harsh, because of my experiences in the Practicum." From this testimony, one can extrapolate countless examples of the discernment and teamwork of the *CAJ* Practicum translating to the work force and citizenry.

Over the past year, Humanities, English, and Writing faculty have been reflecting on the Practicum and its future impact and sustainability as a course offering at Curry. The Practicum has typically run as a small course of up to seven students. With an ever increasing list of courses from which to choose, students' involvement in the Practicum has diminished slightly over the last years; this has caused us to rethink the three-credit model. Prior to 2003, the work of the journal had taken place as part of a literary club or organization. However, the Practicum was developed to allow for more student input than occurred under this model, and as editors we wonder if the sustained work of selecting and editing manuscripts and mentoring writers can feasibly return to a non-credit format where meetings are less frequent and membership varies from meeting to meeting. That said, the journal may see a return to the club/organization format or a move to a new model to be determined in the months ahead.

Speaking of new *CAJ* models, we would like to thank English Club Executive Members

Andrew Blom and Matthew Frumento and Faculty Advisor Brian Duchaney for stepping in this past year when the Practicum course did not run. We certainly appreciate the dedication shown by all as they solicited and workshopped manuscripts for possible inclusion in this year's edition. Our review process took place at the end of the spring semester when *CAJ* Faculty Advisor Karen D'Amato met with a small group of English Club Members to select and edit work for the 2013 edition. Two members, Megan Bucchianeri and Jillian DeSousa, continued this process into the summer by participating in the online selection of alumni work and/or previously published work. Please refer to the front page credits for the rest of the selection team and to the inside back cover for the full roster of 2012-2013 English Club Members. We look forward to another fruitful partnership between the English Club and *CAJ* team this fall as the Practicum returns to celebrate the fortieth anniversary edition with two *CAJ* programs on October 19 during Homecoming weekend: a morning panel on the history and future of the literary and visual arts at Curry and an evening reading by *Curry Arts Journal 2013* authors and friends.

In addition to serving the literary arts, the Practicum has also given Graphic Design students an opportunity to shine. From 2003 to 2011, *CAJ* students solicited cover designs from Graphic Design classes and selected from a variety of designs each year. These inviting and colorful covers all featured the *Curry Arts Journal* title and the year of publication. However, their images were so widely varied that they led us to rethink last year's cover. As part of our redesign, we returned to a solid cover with the new *CAJ* logo centrally located and topped it with a folded jacket that contained images of all the 2012 artwork. This jacket, which could be removed and opened up for posting on a bulletin board or framing on a wall, was received with much acclaim, and we are happy to feature a poster as part of the 2013 edition. We have eliminated the jacket and published the poster and booklet in a slightly smaller format than last year's to allow for a larger print run. You will find this year's poster folded inside the booklet.

As you can see, our fortieth anniversary edition appears at both a celebratory and transitional time in the life of the journal. With the move to faster reading and briefer writing that the internet has engendered, we enter the future with our eyes on the continued publishing of a limited print edition and the expansion of our new website to include *Curry Arts Journal* selections on a monthly, bi-monthly, or weekly basis as time and submissions allow. In this way, we will maintain a well-loved Curry tradition and increase its reach and power. Of course, your thoughts on our future configurations and offerings would be very much appreciated.

In closing, we send abundant thanks to all former *Curry Arts Journal* editors and faculty advisors for preserving the hopes, dreams, questions, and concerns of Curry writers and artists over the decades: you have lovingly captured moments for all to revisit and enjoy.

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Conquer It

by Corey J. Theodore

When most people think of dangling from a rope about seventy feet above the ground, they think of the panic and fear that would cripple them virtually useless. I'm not like most people, and at seventy feet dangling from a rope, panic is the last thing that comes into my mind. I think of the peace, how quiet it is when I'm up so high, taking a deep breath and coughing up all the chalk that is floating around. To most people, Carabiner's is just another building that they drive by, wondering what the inside looks like and telling themselves that they should visit one day. But to me, it is a building that holds challenges both old and new. It is a portal to ancient feelings that my ancestors faced and a wonderful place to push myself and see the earth and its inhabitants in their full glory, twenty meters below me.

When the average man walks in the front doors for the first time, he does not realize the gym's true potential. He has no idea what the

gym can do for him, or what's in store. He has a certain look on his face. Everyone, male or female, has the exact same look. I had it my first time, and if any of you stop by, you can be sure that you will too. There is a second and third look as well. The second is a mix of panic and terror. This is when visitors realize that they will soon be up that high, dangling from a thin rope just like all the crazy people up there on the wall. I can't blame them, for it is exceptionally high and a lot to take in for a new climber. This is when I tell them that they are not in fact going to die, and that it is much more fun than it looks to them. And with that, the third face is shown, one of relief and skepticism.

The problem with people these days is that they are afraid to just climb. They are afraid to leave everything, every problem, every worry, and every care they have behind them and just climb. No need for a reason, no need for inspiration, those are only bonuses; they can

make the experience even more incredible, but it is not necessary to have them. It's when you just climb, for no reason at all, that you learn something about yourself. You reach a hard move, or one that you haven't been able to do before, and instead of feeling that panic, instead of your body tensing with fear, you relax. You breathe.

You do not think about where you are going for dinner afterwards, or that your birthday is coming up. You simply grip tighter; feel your fingers bite the hold as it bites you back, but the pain isn't difficult. It comforts you in a way that only you can understand, almost as if it makes you realize that you exist, that if you feel the pain it makes you real. You push, and your fingers explode, each tendon screaming for you to let go, calling your name in agony and begging to be relieved, but you don't answer it. You can't even hear it, for you are far too focused on the task at hand: getting higher. And once you get higher,

you go higher still, until you can't go any higher, and you think again. You think that the only thing holding you to the wall is a couple of bolts, or you think that your fingers hurt very badly.

No one sees this as they first walk through the doors. They do not even consider anything like this. All that they see is a really high wall, and no skills to conquer it. It is a problem that many of us face throughout our lives. We see a giant wall, and no way to get over it. But every once in a while, we amaze ourselves with skills we never knew we had. I see it all the time: the screams and shouts of people who surprised themselves, the yells of pure joy, pure ecstasy. That is what the wall is all about. It isn't the fact that you made it to the top. It's the fact that you had to push yourself the entire way up.



Jason Katz, "Pieces of the World," Glazed Stoneware

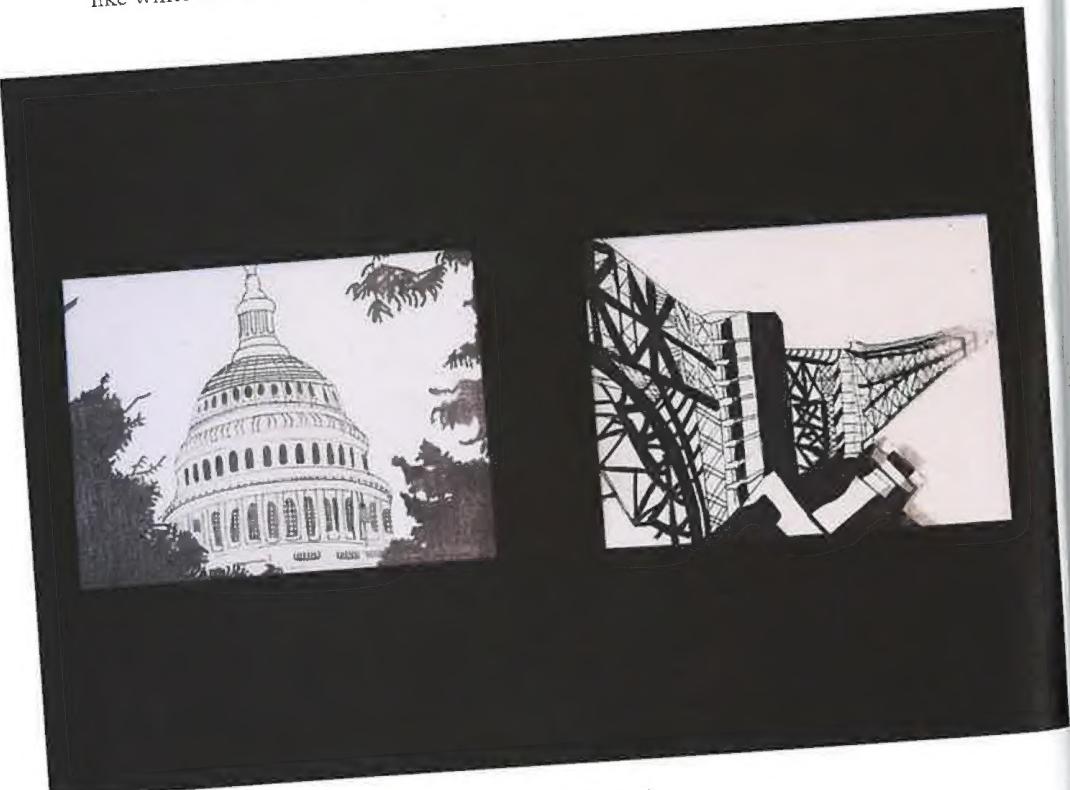
Tierfoot

by Michael Grady

Stagger, catch and flee!
to bound the fallen tree
alight to the other foot—
and notice the fleeting second
of balance neither here nor there
continuing in bounding stride

sprinting fleet of foot;
the shock and awe of life
omnipresent in adrenaline
courses through veins hot
like white-hot shells through air

driving muscles against agony
sucking for oxygen;
cold air burns the lungs,
lovely life lamenting,
celebrating biology's perfect pain,
and violence yields to silence.



Ashley Buckley, "Take a Second Look," Polyester Plate Lithograph

Near-Death Experience

by Omar Cueto

I joined the Army back in 2003 when I was still a junior in high school and living it up. My friend Alex and I always talked about cars and how we would customize them and the different body kits that we would add to the cars. It was very difficult getting into Boston University (BU), the college we wanted to go to, because we could not afford it. So we decided to join the Army and have them pay for it. After we graduated from high school, we both went off to basic training and returned back home to school just how we had planned it. Not only did the military pay for our education at BU, we were in the school that we wanted to attend. It was perfect. But everything changed in 2006 when my unit was informed that part of our regiment was taking too big a loss; the Army was going to pull us to go into Iraq and relieve the soldiers that were already there. My first thoughts were: "Why is this happening to me? Not now, it can't be; everything is great. I did not have this planned, especially when I went into a unit that had never been deployed before." The answer came when I faced firsthand a near death experience with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). This showed me that things happen for a reason and a purpose: I was in Iraq at that moment to experience that event.

In July 2006 my unit arrived in Iraq in a city called Anaconda. It was alive, noisy, and full of people. I had thought that a city in the desert would be quiet and people would be indoors. As I was walking the city, I saw bazaars and busses transporting civilians and soldiers places. I also saw many small buildings and a shopping center that had a Burger King and a Taco Bell. I thought how weird that was. Our military base was stationed fifty miles from Anaconda, northeast towards the Iranian border, which

was only twenty minutes away from Iran. This meant that we were getting attacked from both Iran and Iraq at that time. By February 2007 we were finally able to settle the chaos that was happening around us, but at the cost of many soldiers' lives. It wasn't easy carrying a friend in your arms back to base.

Time went by and daily routines kept getting easier. We would get up in the morning and eat breakfast around 6 a.m., then shave, put on our gear, and make sure all our equipment was packed and ready to deploy at any given time. Once we were ready, we would climb into our vehicles (HMMWVs) and leave the base. Once we arrived on the streets of Ashraf, we performed security checks. The unit would always get tips from the locals about activity taking place in the surrounding villages. If Division suspected something out of the ordinary, the unit would have to go on foot to the area to make sure there was no threat there. All the soldiers would do this for twelve hours in the hot sun, wearing ninety-five pounds of armor that supposedly would protect us from attacks. After the sun went down, the unit headed back to base to do a reverse routine: we unpacked the vehicles, took off all our equipment and put it in cages, and went to dinner and tried to relax knowing that tomorrow the unit would be doing the same routine all over again.

2007 is when the worst day that I can ever imagine took place: what was supposed to be a regular routine mission, just patrolling the streets of Ashraf, turned into disaster. At that point, we had the patrols down to a science: we knew where everything was; we knew all the people that lived in the area, even by first name, and had many locals also come to us and bring us food and water as we were walking by. Things

definitely were getting better. Then one day in July of 2007 something did not feel right. As soon as I and the other soldiers started patrolling the streets, everything seemed too calm. There were no people around us saying hello, bringing us food or water; everything seemed deserted. As we continued patrolling the streets, we approached an intersection in the most dangerous part of the village; everything could be seen from this intersection, and it was the perfect place for local people to fire shots at us. When we came to the intersection, we started looking around the area, as we had been tipped off about some Iraqi civilians being there earlier and planting something on the ground. As I and one other soldier, PFC Suarez, who was with me at the time, were coming up to a tree that was in the middle of the road, we both saw something sticking out of it. As we took a closer look, we heard ticks going off and started to walk away. I told Suarez to report it as a possible IED. Then "BOOM." We were told that we flew over twenty feet from the tree, but it felt like two feet because of how fast it happened.

As much as I thought I did not feel anything, I came to find out later I had been hit with shrapnel. I had fallen to the ground, and as I was passing out I kept calling out "Suarez!" The very last thing I saw was PFC Suarez lying on the ground with a missing arm. When I woke up, I thought I was home and my family had come in to wake me because I had just had a bad dream. I remembered there had been many lights in my face and people calling my name. Then I realized I was sitting in the HMMWV on the way back to base, and I kept hearing people saying, "You're good. You're all intact, lucky s.o.b." I could tell that I was in good hands at that moment and passed out again.

When I finally arose, I was in the medics' quarters being asked what happened; they wanted me to see what I could remember and try to explain it step by step. I told them that all I heard was a tone and nothing else, and that I saw darkness right after I saw the lights and thought I

was in a dream where people were calling out to me as if to come to them. This felt very weird, as I had seen that sort of thing in the movies all the time but never thought it was how it actually happened. I was so relieved that I had made it back to base and that my friend PFC Suarez, even though he had lost an arm, was still alive. I said to him at that time, "There is a bigger purpose that we must fulfill, which is why we are still here," and he agreed as tears came down his face and he was just relieved to be alive as well.

Can a life be given away or taken away at any moment? I think so, as you never know when exactly it's your time: it could be when you least suspect it or it could be that you think it's your time and it's not. Knowing that I could eventually go to war did not stop me from joining the Army back in 2003, when the war had just begun and everyone was getting ready to fight in a war we had no idea about. Looking back at the near-death experience, I think: "What if I had been at home at that time and not in the war? How would things have played out differently? Would I have experienced a near-death event or actually died?" I always live my life and will continue to live my life believing "things happen for a purpose and a reason," which means that I was in Iraq to have the near-death experience and become a better man. Experiencing the near-death event not only changed me as a man but also taught me not to take things for granted and actually appreciate my life. This was the essence I needed to learn a long time ago when I was in high school, struggling to make it, and coming across the military changed my way of living. I could have decided to continue on the same road I was on, and not attend college, and been like the majority of the kids in my culture who barely graduate from high school. I'm proud I chose to follow this path. "Things happen for a purpose and a reason" always, no matter who you are.



Alexandra Cutler, "Untitled," Acrylic, Mixed Media on Canvas



Sasha Gilbert, "Modern Tree," Mixed Media, Wire

I Continue to Climb

by Matthew Walsh

b. 8/29/87, d. 8/29/07

"I Continue to Climb" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2006.

Life comes down to one thing. Of course, I am speaking of experience. Don't we all share our life stories about our experiences? For me, the experience of being diagnosed with cancer shaped me as a person and played an enormous part in how I live my life.

Last year, in December, results came back positive, which meant I had malignant melanoma (skin cancer). Initially, I wasn't upset because I assumed something as little as skin cancer could be treated. Well, I soon found out that the cancer had spread to my lymph nodes. Suddenly, things were not okay anymore. I think my reaction was typical of most people's reactions. I've spent my life with the crazy mentality that nothing bad would ever happen to me. "No, I can't have cancer; I'm not the type of person that gets cancer!" It's ironic and, in a morbid way, kind of funny. We're all aware of experiences that can occur within our lives, yet we always seem shocked when they actually happen.

First, let us flashback to two summers ago. At the age of seventeen I was what you would call your average teenager. I hung out with friends, went to parties, and genuinely had a good time. I was an active student in my high school. For two years I was the president of the key club, and I spent four years as an active member of the high school drama club. Although my academics were never very strong, I was still a well-rounded individual. Like most kids my age, I just wanted to

have fun. Then everything changed with one small mark on the center of my back.

I still remember the day like it was yesterday. My sister and I were just about to jump into our brand new pool on one of the hottest days of the summer, when all of the sudden my sister turned to me and asked what was on my back. At this point I was aware of this growth, but honestly never gave it a second thought. Soon after, it seems like everyone in the family wanted to see it. Everyone seemed to have their own opinions of what it was, or could be. Stupidly, against the advice of all of my sisters, I let it go. There was a new mole on my back that I had never seen before, and I just let it go. To this day, I wonder if my life would have been different had I checked it sooner. A month later, the mole had grown and was now raised off the skin. This was cause enough for concern. At this point, I wasn't familiar with what this could mean; the words skin cancer meant nothing to me. A quick trip to the local doctor and the mole was removed, never to be seen again. The doctor himself, whom I've been seeing my entire life, even was pleased with everything. However, procedure dictates that all removals are sent to a lab for further testing.

Now, skipping a few weeks ahead, I'll always remember being in class when my mom called my cell phone. "But, this makes no sense—she knows I am in class. Why is she calling me?" To me this

meant something was wrong. I actually snuck out of class, found a hidden spot, and called my mother. "Damn it," there was no service in the building. But I heard a voice mail that changed everything. "Matt, it's Mom. I need to bring you to the doctor's straight after school. The mole might not be nothing." Now, imagine hearing that on just a normal day of school. Then out of nowhere a teacher came looking for me and asked if I was Matthew Walsh. He told me that there was an emergency call at the office for me. Of course, it was my mother. So, we went, and to make a long story short, that told me it was melanoma. But there was no cause for concern: it could be removed; they just needed to do some routine surgery to remove the surrounding skin.

This already was an experience I didn't want. Well, afterward, two more surgeries were required because the cancer spread in my body and got my lymph nodes. Believe me, this made my past year one from hell! After the surgeries, which were spread out over six to eight months, I had to start chemotherapy. To give a sense of how tough this has been, let me just say that to this day I still receive chemo three times a week. The first month I had to leave school every day and go sit in a chair for hours on end. Suddenly, I was forced to grow up! This meant no more fun at the school lunch table, but a lonesome lunch at the doctor's surrounded by much older and sicker patients. For a month I did that every day. Although it may not seem long, it felt like forever. Now I go three times a week just for a quick shot. It all wouldn't be too bad, but the side effects are awful. They have calmed down quite a bit from the beginning, but they still really bother me. The best way I can describe it is like having constant flu. We all know the feeling: lightheaded, hot one minute, cold the next. Your body is shaking uncontrollably and you can't do anything about it. Well, I had that feeling every day of the week. I had a flu that just wouldn't go away.

I guess you just start to get used to it, but some things you never get used to. For instance, my immune system is a lot weaker than my peers', so my doctor told me if my friends even had colds,

I couldn't be around them. I was never to share a drink or anything with anyone. All of this is still true today. I just get sick too easily. The worst part is that the chemo attacked my thyroid. This caused me to get very rundown, to the point where I walk a flight of stairs and I'm ready to pass out. I have difficulty breathing. Plus, I am now on so many medications that it does a number on my stomach, and eating isn't easy.

I can honestly say I hate it. I hate that I can't be a kid, and I hate that this disease chose me. I hate that I can't even run around with my little one-and-a-half-year-old nephew without needing to rest every minute so I don't fall over. One thing I will say though is I don't regret any of it. This has been an awful experience, and I wouldn't wish it upon anyone. However, because of this downfall, I have grown up so much and learned so much about myself and my own family. I know I am very strong, and I have people around me who care for me more than I would ever know.

If I have learned one thing, I can say it is that anything is possible! I learned that due to experience. As a people, we need to realize that nothing is guaranteed to us. Think about it, the only thing anyone is really promised is death. It is gloomy-sounding and unfortunate, but true. I've learned not to take life for granted. Now, that's not to say I feel I've been reborn and live each day to its fullest potential. However, I can say my eyes are a little clearer. I do recognize the fact that each day is a gift.

The most important thing I've learned is to be grateful for my life. How many people actually sit down and say, "Wow, I'm lucky to be here!" I'd be willing to bet there aren't too many. So you see, experience shapes who we are. Again, having cancer hasn't totally altered my mentality on life but the experience has clearly opened up my mind a bit more. I have been held back, but it has caused me to really think about what I want out of life and helped me to go for it. The greatest part is that as I sit here, I have only four more weeks of treatment left. I have made it so far, and experience has taught me that I just need to hang on a little longer.

My Enemy

by Megan Shea

I hear the thump, thump, thump.
I sense the closing in of walls
and my head fighting the darkness
that wants to embody me.
I fight the thump, thump, thump.
I fight the darkness looming.

The pain is pounding
like a hammer slamming
against a nail.
I fight the thump, thump, thump.
I fight the darkness looming.

My enemy strikes without warning,
worms its way into my head.
Oh, how it aches!
I fight the thump, thump, thump.
I fight the darkness looming.

My battle can be won
as sure as the stars are in the sky
or it could be lost to
the darkness that envelopes me—
sleep.
I fight the thump, thump, thump.
I fight the darkness looming.

Dear Ms. Misery

by Brittany Capozzi

Do you remember that picture
of you and me two weeks after
Janet died? Mom took us to the park.
Your arms held my legs from
pumping on the swing.
Dear old Ms. Misery.

Do you remember March of '05,
when I lost dad
for three minutes to a seizure?
You enveloped me with sheets of worry.
Yes, that was you,
Ms. Misery.

You squeezed my intuition when
I tasted you on my tongue
three years later; I let go of
someone through your words
on that mossy Moose Hill.
Descending,

each click of my shoes
echoed syllables
I'm-not-hap-py-with-you.
Without a hand to
guide me, the syllables
quicken,
jumbled over rocks
Imnothappywithyou,
Imnothappywithyou.
Misery...

You and I have felt the high
temperatures of emotion—
fear.
Without you, Misery,
I could not have met
Strength.

So,
my close friend,
my shadow,
can you **make it rain**
so I can **have my tears back**?
I need more....

Thanks,
Faith



Samantha Carr, "Searching," Black and White Digital Photography

I Played Fetch with God

by Samantha Crescitelli

"I Played Fetch with God" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2009.

I've never considered myself much of a believer. I've never identified with a saint, or felt the desire to drop to my knees in prayer to bring good into my life. In fact, I've always believed the notion of praying to a faceless being with a rather generic name to be tedious. What is more irritating I've found, however, is not the people that are normally regarded as Bible-thumpers, or people who are truly religious and have found solace in belief; it is the people who insist on participating in superficial faith. The kind of people who pray only when something has gone horribly wrong in their lives, or when they want something of material benefit. Praying for a Coach bag will not make it appear at your bedside when you wake, nor will it put the \$600 in your pocket to buy your own (and if \$600 does miraculously materialize in your pocket, I am sure there would be many more advisable ways to spend the cash). The fact of the matter here is, I haven't enough faith in anyone (this includes myself) to do anything that will benefit me, or give me something that I've asked for, so I

won't trust the universe, either. All I can do is make my own luck.

This brings me to the day I sat in a chair in my living room with my feet tucked under me, twirling a pen in my hand and staring at the dog I'd impulsively decided to rescue from a shelter that morning in a desperate attempt for companionship. He sniffed idly around his new surroundings, glancing at me every few minutes with big brown eyes full of reproach, as though asking for some indication of what he should do next. I was contemplating what to name him, a very serious matter for me, and did not appreciate his attempts to distract me. He was barely a year and a half old and had been neglected by his previous owners who simply called him Al, which I found to be an absolutely

informidable name for a dog.

"What to name you," I pondered aloud.

As I thought, the pen I'd been toying with fell from between my fingers and clattered gently to the hardwood floor. Within seconds, the dog was by my side with the pen in his mouth, wagging his tail

happily. I took it cautiously, surprised when he didn't put up a fight. No dog I'd ever owned had actually ever played fetch properly and willingly given up the object without a rousing game of tug of war.

I experimentally tossed the pen further across the room. Again, the dog fetched it and brought it back to me. He appeared to be smiling—if dogs can even smile the same way we do.

Maybe he's just being a suck up, I thought. Trying to be cute. I repeated the cycle three more times, just to be sure. This dog was positively unfaltering in his promptness in returning the pen.

"All right," I said aloud, "this just might be too good to be true."

I sighed heavily. I wondered how obedient this dog really was, and even began to look forward to not needing to train him. I would put him to the test.

"Sit."

He did.

"Lie down."

He did. I knew that I was beginning to grasp at straws of what could have easily been false hope.

"Roll over?"

He rolled across the carpet not once, but twice. "Show off," I mumbled, though I was truly impressed.

"Play dead." Surely this would be the final test of this dog's capabilities.

I began to believe that this dog was a better

actor than Keanu Reeves (which I'll be the first to admit is a very low standard, even for a dog). How wonderfully refreshing to have someone—or rather something—listen to me for once, obey my every command without questioning me. I looked back at him and ordered: "Stay," just for good measure as I made my way to my computer. I pulled up an empty e-mail to send a message to my mother inquiring about suggestions for a name. Hi Mom, I began, I adopted a dog this morning and I'm having a really hard time coming up with a name. He really is the most bizarre god I've ever—oops, typo. Delete delete del—god? I looked over my shoulder at the dog who was looking at me expectantly, as though he knew what I was thinking, his tongue lolling sloppily to one side.

This dog did everything I told him to without question. How ironic, not to mention downright blasphemous, that I might name him God and be the one ordering him around. I pictured future conversations with my family and friends: "So what did you do this morning?" they would ask. "Oh, nothing much," I'd reply. "Just played some fetch with God."

I laughed to myself as I absently patted him on the head, "I think you just might be the answer to my religious identity crisis."



Alexandra Garrity, "Confessions," Glazed Stoneware

A Plastic Minister

by Andrew Blom

We were losers who should be shot, I turned the corner with Boyd on our way to school and was talking about Latin class. We were seniors, and although I don't remember the day it was very warm and it was Career Day so it was sometime in May. Again, I don't remember it very well. This was our fourth year taking Latin but each year it was first period of the day and the two of us always smoked weed in my car before school. Obviously, neither of us had taken a single thing in and we were joking today how some guy with a time machine could appear out of nowhere and grab us and take us back to Rome in the ancient time thinking that we could help him lead the resistance against the non-Latin speakers but this guy wouldn't know that we knew just as much about Latin as a vacuum cleaner and not a very good one at that.

We weren't intoxicated today because our dealer had recently been accused of rape and, although he wasn't in jail yet, the two of us had strict convictions about purchasing weed from rapists. We were eighteen and we couldn't pretend either of us was ever going to achieve anything. Everyone when they're young wants to be the shortstop for the Red Sox or President of

the United States or an astronaut. When they get older people want to be a rock star or an actor or write for *Rolling Stone*. We weren't pessimists but realists. We knew we would be mailmen or janitors. Boyd always told people he wanted to work in a steel mill. Most steel mills weren't in operation anymore but that just gave Boyd the chance to tell everyone and our guidance counselor, "Yeah well I'm going to buy a steel mill and employ myself just so that I can tell people I'm a fucking steel mill worker."

I wanted to work at an amusement park. Maybe one of the game booths. People, mostly psychiatrists, would ask me why and I would always tell them "just because." I really don't know. For Boyd and me there was always something about never living up to others' expectations that gave us some kicks. We were going to amount to nothing and that was fine with us.

Fuck Career Day. You learn more about life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness from any other day of your miserable life. A while ago, Boyd and I learned about acceptance in the things you can't change. High school taught us that we weren't good at anything and we would be steel

mill and amusement park losers.

That was fine. At least we're fine and not getting beaten every day. We had our looks. Both of us thought that if you didn't die without some sort of Sexually Transmitted Disease, you weren't really trying hard enough. Boyd learned that when you get an STD you don't think this way anymore.

I learned from my parents that we wouldn't always be young.

We have to go to homeroom at the start of the day. We were in different rooms. I learned I should try and make some more friends. Mickey sits in front of me. He has Down Syndrome. I learned from him that I don't have any real problems. He always turns around and arm wrestles me. I always let him win. Someday I'll beat him just to see the expressions on others' faces and imagine them saying, "What an asshole." Sometimes, because I'm that kid every school has who is a complete asshole, after I'm done wrestling him I'll walk over to the hand sanitizer and put a gallon of it in my hand and tell everyone I don't want to catch anything.

I learned two things here: 1) This is why I have no other friends, and 2) puke green is the color of the paint on the walls inside the principal's office.

This was her second year on the job, after our old principal committed suicide, which made us look really bad. She supposed that because it was Career Day, I would be better off attending each of the sessions which on this day replaced our classes. She suggested I start keeping my mouth shut. I learned that this is incredibly difficult to do.

She also told me she would love to see me come to school tomorrow with a haircut. She said all the employers today looked for clean young people. I learned that I would never work for a guy who would make me cut my hair. I learned that I would never join the Marines. I learned that I didn't really want to die for this country.

Outside her office are our school's two secretaries, our vice principal and our guidance

counselor. I learned neither of them knew who I actually was. I learned that I really regret causing so much trouble for all of them. I learned they won't be sad when I leave in three weeks. I learned most people found me unpleasant. I learned how replaceable I was at this school. Actually, the kids who come here next year will be an improvement on me. It's funny and it's sad. I learned that all my life I will be struggling with how I feel about certain things. I learned that everything changes and that even though it always will I never see it coming.

I walked through the halls and our first session had already started. It was forensic psychology. Boyd was sitting in the back and he had told me the day before he was going to be that asshole who asked if they were like the people on the CSI shows, but by the time I arrived someone had already asked that question. I learned no matter how original you are there's always someone more original.

The Forensic guy talked for twenty minutes about his job, about understanding criminal law and all sorts of things that have very little to do with photographing crime scenes laced with semen like we all thought. He asked us if we had any questions. He was not sitting in the room with the Future Forensic Psychologists of the world. The Q&A for each session would last fifteen minutes. We were on minute two so I raised my hand.

I said, "Tell me a story." He said sure, but which aspect of the field would I like to hear?

I said, "No, no, no, just tell me a story, about a princess or a dragon or something."

The guy laughed and so did everyone else. I learned that most people don't understand me.

The session got over and we were broken into groups based on a questionnaire we filled out a week ago. This fifteen-question thing determined how I would best utilize my potential. I learned that I would best serve the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by working at a phone company.

Next to my locker was Victor. He asked if I was heading to the planetarium. I said, "Wa-

anyone heading to the planetarium?"

"Yeah, the floweriest folk are. I'm going to drop some acid real quick right now. You in?"

I told him I'm good.

He said, "Man, that's ok too."

Then I saw Molly. She and Boyd were married. I say that because they have been dating since the fifth grade and because one night I did one of those things where you become an ordained minister on line for twenty dollars. I married them one night after we set fire to this pile of basketballs we stole from our gym, and the two of them were drunk and they kept dancing and I had to keep leaning them away from the fire. I don't think either of them even knew they were married to each other.

Molly was addicted to caffeine and she typically consumed four energy drinks a day. But she didn't have one in her hand today. It may have been why I didn't recognize her after she sat beside me. She was a future telephone repair person too.

"I have to tell you I feel a real low down today," she said.

"You haven't had your drinks today. You're not pregnant are you?"

"People keep asking me that. Do people ask you that a lot?" she said.

"Do people ask me if I'm pregnant? I mean I guess sometimes but not a lot."

She laughed. I learned the people who get my sense of humor are keepers.

I said to her, "Tell you what, just to be sure I'll push you down the stairs a little later today."

She laughed again and said how nice it was that I was looking after her.

We learned then how we never realized how much we enjoyed repairing telephones until we were told how much we enjoyed repairing telephones.

I wrote a poem:

"Apples are good and tasty
Everyone eats them
If they were called Broccoli
No one would eat them

'Cause no one eats Broccoli"

The next session was with a police officer but I was stopped in the hall by our guidance counselor, Ms. Howe. This was about what I said the day before to my English Teacher, Ms. Donovan. She kept me after school and asked me why I didn't finish my ten page research paper about William Faulkner. This is what I said to her:

"I'm sorry but you see I sat down to write it and my nice mother wanted to take me out to lunch but I said I couldn't because I had to write your paper and I got a page done about Faulkner's childhood. Did you know a black woman helped raise him? But then my mother asked again if I wanted to go to lunch and again I had to say no because of the paper but I kept at it, and did you know he didn't write his first novel until he was around twenty-eight? Don't most writers publish something shitty before that at least? I guess he figured to perfect his craft before. Then she asked me again to take her out to lunch and I'm like, 'Ma, please I got to write Ms. Donovan's paper' so I kept at it, but then I had finished the second page when I heard a bang like someone dropping a dictionary on the floor in the other room so I got up to investigate and it was my mother. She had shot herself in the head with a shotgun

because I wasn't able to take her to lunch because I was too busy writing your paper, Ms. Donovan, so then I had to stop completely you know so I could run to the store and buy some limes so I could bury her dead body in the backyard with my father, but I was going to try and finish up the paper that night but I should have known it would take longer to bury her since she was eight-and-a-half months pregnant, but again I'm terribly sorry but I can hand in the finished paper next week if you'll excuse it for being late."

Ms. Donovan just sat there and I could tell I had pissed her off, and I figured I was old enough to know when an adult was finished talking so I excused myself from the room and walked home. I learned that I was too clever for my own good. I learned that people tend to take things too

seriously. I learned that I was helping to put the guidance counselor's children through medical school.

She told me to expect a phone call later that day to my mother and the three of us would meet for coffee in the morning to talk about this incident. She asked me what time would be good for my mother. I said to her, "I'll have to check with the worms." I learned that other people decide the moment where you have to start growing up.

I had a break between our next sessions but it was our daily meeting with the baseball coach. I was looking for a way out. I learned that saying, "He molested me" was always the easiest way of getting out of something. I learned just how different I am. I learned how I'm never happy with what I have.

The next session was with a lab technician who specialized in blood work. But he was Egyptian and knew a lot about physics, and because there was only a few of us there Molly asked him if he knew how to make an atomic bomb. He did. I learned how to make an atomic bomb in case the Nazis ever reemerge as a threat. I learned that I wouldn't mind spending my life in prison.

After him there was a fireman, but instead Boyd and I decided to leave school. We knew the back door of the woodshop room was never monitored. I learned there was always a way out.

I realized he hadn't said a word in a couple of hours, but our relationship never went into the whole "What's wrong? You can talk to me."

I thought that he was planning on running off to find a steel mill.

He said to me, "Well I should probably go turn myself in."

I let him leave, because what business was it of mine to stop him? I learned to get out of people's ways. I ducked back into school and it was the beginning of the last session and it was with this asshole that was named Crispus who used to be a junkie but now owned a non-profit organization after he found God.

"I am a minister now," the old junkie said.
"Stay with me and I'll turn you on to some stuff."

I told Molly that her husband left to kill himself and she said, "Well, at least there'll be an extra parking spot for me at school now."

After this session I went to the woodshop room alone because there was only ten minutes left. I thought about putting my hand through the wood planer because it would get me out of baseball practice that day and out of the Army. I thought if I did it and didn't tell anyone I would develop some sort of infection and I could get into that Make-A-Wish Foundation, and because I'm such a punk they would ask me what my one wish was and this is what I honestly would say to them:

"What I really wish was that I was deaf, dumb and blind, with no arms and legs and with a shaved head and didn't have to do nothing all day but sit in a chair in the corner of a room, with a nurse checking on me twice a day, and I want one window in the room and I want it opened so that birds can fly in and pick away at me, and I would like the nurse to bring me flowers. Lilies. And I want her to put them in a vase on the windowsill and I want to be able to smell them because I suck at everything else."



Sasha Gilbert, "Origami Book," Mixed Media Artist's Book

The Silly Angry Poem

by Dan Kessel

A vortex of grinding gumption gearing to get out,
In the very depths of my being, a tune rings about,
Like an honest man with a righteous cause,
Charging in without the slightest pause,
Marching down upon the shoulders of war,
Pounding rhythmically through every corridor,
He rallies his troops from their great big cage,
Where sleeps the incarnation of ultimate rage,
Claws and paws maul the bars and the entrapment begins to shake,
Chains lash around, the fiends are vexed to make their break,
And like the culmination of prophecy it all happens at once,
They gush forth and ricochet as if blind, deaf and dunc,
It comes over me like a wave washing away all emotion,
Like a shadow consuming day with unwavering devotion,
Smashing through, cell by cell, corrupting and manipulating,
Creeping in, standing hairs on end, virulently stimulating,
All the while sitting here, pondering my heart,
What would happen if truth and loyalty hadn't fallen apart?

The Interview

by Paul Varga

*"The Interview" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2008.
Paul Varga's new dedication is printed below and followed by his original.*

Summer 2013

I want to specially dedicate this republication of "The Interview" to D-L Garren, who helped guide me through the process, and of course lots of love to Matt, Joe and Cheryl, and the entire Walsh family.

Spring 2008

Little does a playwright or a writer get a chance to see a character embodied to perfection. I had the pleasure and the gift to see that happen just over a year ago. With the talent of any movie or stage actor, with the grace and presence of any academy award winner and the personality of a saint, Matthew Walsh brought the character of Mr. Angelo to life. In one of his last performances at Curry College he sent chills rolling up and down my spine as well as many in the audience. He truly was an angel.

Since Matt's death, I have been hesitant to look at this piece of work. I am not sure why— maybe because I would have to face directly the death of a classmate, maybe I would have to face my own mortality. However, after another round of e-mails from the Curry Arts Journal and the suggestion by several very persuasive professors, I decided to give it another look. As I did, I came to the conclusion that instead of hiding this play because of the memories attached I should share it because my hand had been guided to capture the spirit of a man who lived life to the fullest, who taught more with a smile than I could ever imagine. With his own strength and hope he gave so much strength and hope, not only to the people that he came in contact with but to the community at large.

Matt, although you are not here with us physically, you have left an impact that will forever lighten my heart.

I feel that we met before we ever came in contact, and I dedicate this play, not to your memory but to your everlasting spirit that not only inspires me but an entire community. I thank you and your family, and now forever the spirit you have shared will be enshrined and shared with generations to come. Enjoy the view, Matt. Enjoy the view.

Characters:

Jose Smith: 28 - Tall and slender. Wears nice suit and tie. Go-getter. Inquisitive, not shy. Looks confused.

Mr. Angelo: 50 - Yet looks no definite age. Wears primped white suit and hair is grey. Walks with confidence and knowledge.

Jenny: 24 - Pretty, long hair, in shape. Wears provocative professional clothing.

Setting:

A large conference room. Walls are decorated with different sorts of pictures. Window on back wall looks out onto blue sky with puffy clouds. Walls are taupe with a gold trim. Fake plant next to window is painted with a hint of gold. Next to fake plant sits tall bookcase full of pictures of dead celebrities. Bookcase has gold trim. In middle of stage is a large table with gold trim. Chairs line around table. On Stage right wall sits a coat rack. Door on stage left has light changing from white to red throughout the play.

JENNY: (Walks into room from door on stage right to door with white light shining through window) Your next appointment is here, Mr. Angelo.

MR. ANGELO: (Offstage) Thank you, Jenny. Please see him in and help him get situated.

JENNY: Yes, Sir. (Walks back across stage and opens door stage right) Right this way. Mr. Angelo will be with you in a moment.

JOSE: (Enters) Sorry I'm late. There was a terrible accident. Traffic tied up for blocks and blocks.

JENNY: An accident?

JOSE: Yeah. Dump truck slammed into some car. Right outside your building.

JENNY: That's awful.

JOSE: What a mess... Ambulances. Police. Didn't you hear the sirens?

JENNY: Not really. We're pretty cut off from the world way up here.

JOSE: (Looking around) Nice place. Is this Mr. Angelo's office?

JENNY: No. Just the conference room. Mr. Angelo prefers to screen his applicants out here. (Crosses to JOSE) May I take your jacket?

JOSE: Why, yes. Thank you. (Smiles)

JENNY: (Walks behind JOSE and slowly pulls off jacket, feels his shoulders and arms) Oooo... You're all tensed up from that accident. Can I get you something to drink? Coffee? Tea? Me?

JOSE: What?

JENNY: Just kidding. (Hanging jacket on a hook behind the door) I can tell you work out. You are in very good shape, Mr. Smith.

JOSE: (Shifts body) Thank you, my wife and I run every morning.

JENNY: Well, you know, if you get this job, you might be working very late. Sometimes we might even have to stay overnight. Maybe we can

go get a drink later and talk about our favorite jogging routes.

JOSE: Oh. Thanks anyway. Drinks and jogging dates are purely for me and my wife. And overnights away from home are pretty much out of the question.

JENNY: Up to you. It's a free world. (Smiles as MR. ANGELO enters from white-light-filled door with folder in hand) I will be seeing you soon. Nice to meet you, Jose. (Jenny exits quickly stage right)

MR. ANGELO: (Clears throat) You must be Mr. Smith. (Walks toward JOSE)

JOSE: (Stretches out hand) And you must be Mr....

MR. ANGELO: Angelo. (Walks past outstretched hand and pulls out two chairs from conference table half-kitty-corner to one another and the audience) Sorry, I'm coming down with a cold. Wouldn't want you to catch it. Please sit. (JOSE sits) Thank you for coming down so fast. We just got your resume and we really wanted to meet you.

JOSE: (Nervously) Well, I am just glad you called— (beat) I didn't know you had my resume.

MR. ANGELO: Well, we like to say we have everyone's resume. (Smiles)

JOSE: What?!

MR. ANGELO: Just a little joke, Mr. Smith. (Smiles) Now, I have a few questions for you. No need to be nervous. Just answer truthfully and honestly. (Takes reading glasses out of breast pocket, puts them on and opens file) After all, it's not a matter of life or death.

JOSE: (Fidgets in chair) Yes, sir. I'm ready. Fire away.

MR. ANGELO: (Peers down nose) Well then, let's start, shall we? (Looks down at paper) Full name.

JOSE: Jose Anthony Smith.

MR. ANGELO: Age?

JOSE: Twenty-eight.

MR. ANGELO: Married? Single? Children? JOSE: No children yet. Married to a beautiful woman named Katie.

MR. ANGELO: Ah, yes. Katie.

JOSE: Do you know her? (MR ANGELO points to JOSE's resume) Was that in my resume?

MR. ANGELO: (Interrupting him) Moving on. Do you see yourself as being religious?

JOSE: Not terribly. (Eager to please) I try to live a good life as much as possible. (Beat) Isn't that a personal question?

MR. ANGELO: Personal?

JOSE: And not to sound rude, but ...your secretary said some things that made me a bit uncomfortable.

MR. ANGELO: Uncomfortable? I'm sorry. I'll talk to her about it later. (Shuffling through folder) I only asked about religion because sometimes you might have to work Sundays and I wanted to know if there was a conflict.

JOSE: (Relieved and a bit amused) No problem.

MR. ANGELO: Fine then. Moving on. Why did you want to work for us?

JOSE: Well, I feel I can bring my own values, beliefs, and a certain amount of knowledge to this company.

MR. ANGELO: I see. Have you ever worked in Human Resources? We have an immediate opening for the director's position.

JOSE: Wow, that sounds great! What type of skills are you looking for in that department?

MR. ANGELO: We're looking for an insightful individual, Jose. We need someone with a good sense of reading people.

JOSE: Well, I think I'm a pretty good judge of character. And with a background in psychology and in communication...

MR. ANGELO: We need someone who can dive deep. Someone who can screen applicants and also keep an eye on the work force.

JOSE: How so?

MR. ANGELO: Well, in the past, certain...undesirables...have seeped into this company. We'd need you to keep a close watch on the workers and weed out the ones who are...not appropriate.

JOSE: Not appropriate?

MR. ANGELO: Well, earlier this year, we had some trouble...

JOSE: What kind of trouble?

MR. ANGELO: Well, there was this woman. Very pushy. You know the typical Hispanic type.

JOSE: But, Mr. Angelo...I'm...

MR. ANGELO: And it's not just those wetbacks. We had some Muslim employees...

JOSE: Muslims. I see. And what did THEY do?

MR. ANGELO: The usual. Refused to conform. One woman wouldn't take off her head scarf. Next thing you know, they'll be praying in their cubicles. It's just not professional.

JOSE: I see.

MR. ANGELO: We also had some problems with our Negroes. And, what do you call them? ...Chinks.

JOSE: (Measuring up Mr. Angelo and the situation) You mean African Americans and Asian Americans?

MR. ANGELO: You know THOSE people. We had some thefts in the office. We thought it would be a good idea to let them all go. So, in case any apply in the future, we'd need you to screen them out. (Offers JOSE a candy from a candy dish on the table) By the way, you're not gay are you?

JOSE: (*Waving away the candy*) You're kidding about all this. Right, Mr. Angelo?

MR. ANGELO: We're just trying to run a business. Just like any other hard-working outfit. Oh. Did I mention people with any sort of disability? A lot of the time people can hide that stuff, and you really have to test them.

JOSE: (*Clears throat*) Excuse me, sir.

MR. ANGELO: (*Smiling*) Ah, yes. You probably want to know your pay scale. This is a big job. How does \$95,000 a year sound for starters?

JOSE: Well...

MR. ANGELO: No. You're right. With your credentials, we could go another five. That WOULD put you in the six-figure bracket.

JOSE: (*Sternly*) Sir, do you realize what you are asking me to do?

MR. ANGELO: What? A pay cut? Well, \$105,000 is about as high as we can go.

JOSE: I'm sorry, Mr. Angelo. (*Stands*) I'm really not your man for the job.

MR. ANGELO: What do you mean?

JOSE: (*Walks past MR. ANGELO and grabs coat, trying not to raise his voice*)

You're talking serious discrimination here, Mr. Angelo.

MR. ANGELO: Come on, Jose. These are "unspoken rules." Everyone's got them. There's no legal liability...

JOSE: (*Beginning to rise to the occasion*) You're talking prejudice. Bigotry! Those people you've "screened out" were probably just as good as any employee here. Some probably better. Discrimination is against the law. And, with all due respect, it's also REALLY bad for business!

MR. ANGELO: (*Still calmly*) Let me be the judge of that, Jose. Why don't you step into the inner office, and we'll process the paperwork.

JOSE: Mr. Angelo, let me put it to you clearly. I'd rather die than work for such a company.

(*Grabs door handle*)

MR. ANGELO: (*Oddly amused*) You'd rather die...?

JOSE: Just a figure of speech, Mr. Angelo. I'd rather sit in that traffic, while they clear that wreck downstairs, than spend another minute here. (*Tries to open door but only handle moves; MR. ANGELO watches in silence as JOSE tries a few times unsuccessfully to open door*)

MR. ANGELO: We can't let you go, Jose.

JOSE: What?!? What IS this?

MR. ANGELO: You can't go back, Jose.

JOSE: What?!? You can't hold me here!

MR. ANGELO: You can't go back, Jose. (*Pause*) No one can.

(*JOSE lets go of the door handle, turns, and looks at MR. ANGELO*)

JOSE: (*Slowly*) What do you...?

MR. ANGELO: Jose, what type of car do you drive?

JOSE: A 2004 Chevy Impala. Why?

MR. ANGELO: What color?

JOSE: (*Slowly*) Blue.

MR. ANGELO: Now think back. What kind of car was hit in that accident?

JOSE: (*Sofily*) A blue Chevy Impala. (*Now speechless*)

MR. ANGELO: Most unfortunate accident. (*Taking off glasses and putting them away*) A young man on his way to (*looks at JOSE*) a job interview.

JOSE: (*Stunned, JOSE walks slowly to the window and gazes down*) Are you telling me...?

MR. ANGELO: (*Gently*) No one could survive an accident like that, Jose.

JOSE: Whew! Do you mean I'm...? Well, I'm...?

MR. ANGELO: Yes, Jose.

JOSE: (*Near to surrender, but not quite*) What about my wife? I just kissed her goodbye an hour ago. (*Beat*) (*Walking slowly back to chair*) So, what IS this place? (*Sits*)

MR. ANGELO: This is what you might call "an examining room." You know, where folks come to be tested.

JOSE: What kind of test?

(*JENNY enters stage right wearing white choir robe and white head scarf*)

JENNY: Think of it as... kind of a Placement Test.

MR. ANGELO: Started the moment you walked through this door. First with Jenny...

JENNY: (*Smiles sweetly*) Sorry about that.

MR. ANGELO: We needed answers to some questions. Like do you honor your commitments? Do you keep your vows?

JOSE: (*Catching on, looking at Jenny*) Do I cheat on my wife? (*Smiles*) Not much of a test. Not if you knew Katie.

JENNY: You'd be surprised. (*JENNY walks by JOSE, lightly touches him on the shoulder as she passes, and stands next to Mr. ANGELO*)

JOSE: (*Getting it*) So. Wait. All that stuff about ... Muslims... Jews... people of color...? And that crazy salary?

MR. ANGELO: Fear and greed, Jose. Fear and greed. Major test for a lot of folks.

JOSE: So I ...

JENNY: (*Smiling*) You passed just fine.

JOSE: And my wife?

MR. ANGELO: (*Stands up*) All in good time,

Jose. All in good time. (*Walks to toward office door*) Love is stronger than Death.

JOSE: (*With bleak look*) No! No, I don't buy this. This can't be.... It just can't be.

MR. ANGELO: It will be okay, Jose. Please, you have to...

JENNY: Jose, please settle down. This is real, you know this is real. Everything will be okay. It's not an end, it's a beginning.

JOSE: (*Stands up, composes himself, and walks with Jenny to the door*) I think (*beat*) I think I'm ready.

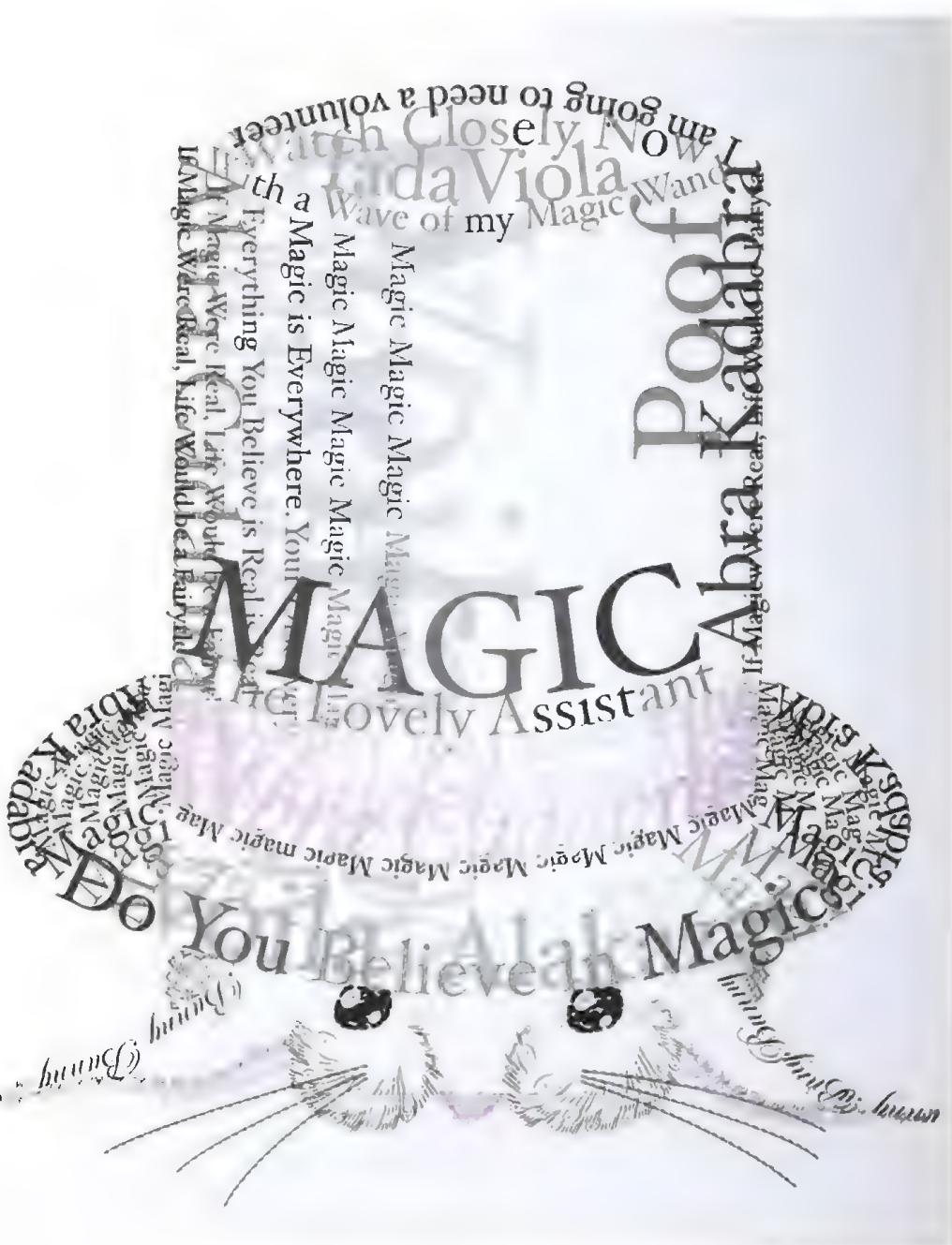
JENNY: Are you sure?

JOSE: (*Smiles confidently*) Yes, I am.

MR. ANGELO: Right through here, Jose. (*Taking JOSE's arm*) Step into my office. (*Opens door*) I think you'll like the view.

(*Lights dim low. Mr. ANGELO opens door and bright white light floods stage. JOSE walks through door, followed by JENNY. Harp music and the sounds of happy laughter can be heard. MR. ANGELO takes handle of the door, exits slowly shutting door behind him. Stage goes black and after a few moments white light slowly dims till stage is in total blackout*)

CURTAIN



Candace Cobuzzi, "From Under the Hat," Digital Print
First appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2010.

The Halloween Party

by John Dejesu

"The Halloween Party" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 1979.

I could see the glow from under the sheet. The blasts through the itchy speaker suggested a slow, agonizing shell mission. I had fallen asleep before the movie came on. Pressing the end of the cover taut around my neck I felt secure that my body was nourished in its own warmth. The window by my head was open allowing walls of air to pass by my exposed face. Then, beneath the silence and the purity of the autumn night-sky, came this:

"Hey c'mon, you up? Sammy? Hurry, get down here." It was an unrecognizable voice in the crisp stillness. "Turn the tube off and c'mon. We're late!" The last word—LATE—was pronounced with a higher pitch, more hurried. It was Lorna Layton. Her voice was alone and indistinguishable. Aside from the droning of traffic on Route 13 a din so unending, almost like silence itself — her voice was nighttime noise made detectable by its urgent whisper.

"You're late, Lorn. What took ya? I nodded out waiting for you," I said in the general direction of the window as I hopped up, whirling the sheet back in place, turning the TV off in the same motion.

"Just get down here before your parents come peeping out the windows. I'm not dealing with them now," Lorna said, concealing her voice below a yell.

The air felt chilly because I had just risen from sleep. I told Lorna I must have looked like a Chinaman because my eyes hadn't had a chance to fully open yet. She agreed with a laugh and rubbed her hand up and down my back to get me comfortable again. Mom came to the door to confirm my destination. She stood ominously on the brick steps, stiff in the Halloween-night air, directing her authority in statements to Lorna and me. She said nothing to Lorna, not a hello. She only mentioned that she and Dad would be at the Layton's Halloween party if anything happened.

We turned after the door had lashed shut with the brush of autumn cold against glass and metal.

"Did you get the eggs and those flower bomb things Marcus told us about?" I said.

"Yeah. And some shave cream of Dad's and three or four rotten, oozing, cancerous tomatoes from the bottom of the bin in the fridge." Like a goblin she was excited with the last bit of artillery added to our soft-core arsenal.

"Great," I said. I couldn't get anything from here. Mom didn't like the idea of me throwing away good food. She didn't think we should cheat some starving kid out of 'sound nourishment,' as she said. "What took ya, anyway?" We walked toward the station wagon.

"Mom's bitchin' at Dad and I couldn't get the car till now. I had to help Mom set up for the party. Everybody's coming. It should be a real cooker! Mom wanted me to get the liquor but Dad said they probably wouldn't sell to me at Sonny's. I would have loved to have told him about the times we bought there already. It's not locked," Lorna said as we stepped into her mom's car.

"Did you buy tonight Lorn?" I questioned with hope, fearing the letdown of no beer. Lorna was older than I — not much, maybe a year and a half, but she could probably buy anywhere. She got shot down once after we drove an hour out of the state to Peeks Ferry. The owner wouldn't take her I.D. She then started saying something about experience and how he, the guy selling, probably wouldn't know what to do with it once he got it. She was drunk and I was too and wanted no part of any argument out of state, so far from home. We got more beer down the road.

"Sure," Lorna said, tapping the bag behind her. "You think I'd forget beer on Halloween? I headed for Sonny's as soon as I stepped out of the house." A grin focused upon her face as she turned to me. I was excited and smiled right back.

Lorna was an only child who bore an incredible resemblance to her mom. Mrs. Layton was frosted, social, always going somewhere else. She occupied herself with what was most important in her life, the stores on the "row" in our town. She dined out every afternoon and was never in before seven on any weeknight evening. Lorna was conditioned to this as I was conditioned to my mother's cyclic rotation of meals, varying on a weekly basis, always at the same time—six o'clock every week night. Mr. and Mrs. Layton never bore any children of their own, though, and this made Lorna's resemblance to her mom so inexplicable.

We drove to the elementary school parking lot where Lorna parked way down in one corner to stay out of the way of stray cars passing by. I was looking out for the yellow Bonneville, Mom and Dad's car. Whenever I went out I was aware that the Bonneville might be close by. It had once prowled behind me while I was drinking wine on the circle drive in front of the high school. Dad got out, dragged me by the collar into the Bonneville then held my head up straight as best he could as bits of dinner flew out of the passenger window. He said the next morning my lesson was quite apparent. I swore to him I would never drink again. Dad laughed. I was drunk with Lorna the next Saturday.

"Wanna beer?" Lorna said reaching behind her.

I said, "Sure, thought you'd never ask"

With the half-empty beer between my legs Lorna slid over and kissed me like the first time at Marcus' party. Her head was small and I felt confident lacing my fingers through her hair to firmly grip it. Lorna pressed closer, one leg arched across both of mine and my pants bulged against the cold bottle between my legs. A car pulled into the spot next to ours. We were oblivious to the winding glare of the headlights. Lorna straightened.

"Sam-bo! Lorna-Lay! What might you be doing at this lovely site?" yelled a familiar smooth voice across the open windows through both cars. I got out. It was Marcus in his dad's car.

I said, "For a minute I thought you were your old man checkin' up on us." Marcus laughed abruptly then turned the volume high on the car radio so that all of us present would enjoy the tune

— obviously one of his favorites — as much as he had even at that blaring decibel level. I attempted to keep time on the roof of the station wagon by ringing my beer bottle to the dissonant Rolling Stones. I could pick up rhythm on "...gas, gas, gas..." so it was on those words that I really beat on the roof. I preferred Leon Russell's version better and I almost told him.

On the athletic field which we now bordered shone fluorescent dew. An unbroken cloud-grey haze had formed above the blades but all around lie strange pieces of debris: white toilet paper strewn in long lines over the chain-link fence and onto the field; mounds of shave cream planted surrealistically at random on the dried leaves. It all looked awkwardly out of place, desolate and wrong. I looked over to Lorna whose legs were now half out of the car as she spoke to Marcus. Once more I glanced out over the field and the image struck me like a book I once saw where an artist of lesser fame retouched several masterpieces, making them appear disjointed and basically goofy: Mona Lisa had three bosoms and the Gleaners were picking up modern day trash - beer cans and Hershey wrappers — instead of the imagist's crop they were harvesting in the original.

Marcus lowered the radio and coughed immediately. He apologized suavely. "I didn't mean to interrupt but I saw the car, Sammy, knew it was you two and decided to make sure you were coming over to my house later. As you know, Lorna, your folks are having a bash and my folks are going. So, any time after nine is fine. It'll probably go to, well... whenever your folks' party is over. You know your mom, Lorn. They'll be going all night over there. Last time Mrs. Layton was so drunk, Sam, my dad had to carry her down from the dining room table. She was dancing to The Stripper." I had heard this before but I said nothing. Marcus looked at Lorna.

Lorna said, "I've seen her do some pretty crazy things." She compensated for further explanation by rattling the bag for another beer. Marcus looked over us then away.

"You want one, Sam?" The emphasis shifted to me and I took one without word.

"Marcus?" she gestured wide-eyed.

"No thanks, Lorn. Plenty at home... Well you two, any time after nine. Whenever you're ready,"

Marcus said just before he pulled away, radio turned loud again.

Lorna walked onto the field, took a roll of toilet paper and hurled it into the sky. I grabbed two tomatoes and tossed them at a tree near the edge of the lot. Lorna wheeled around like a discus thrower and released a beer bottle into the air — a perfect arc then crash against the building. I pretended not to care or to have noticed. Taking the shave cream from the car I emptied the can on top of the cyclone fence, walking the perimeter of the field for about ninety feet before the can gurgled its last bit of surreal substance. The barbed steel pierced the shave cream once it settled. Picking up the wasted string of toilet paper, Lorna circled with her arm stiff, parading the fallen banner with a sense of injured merit. She did this to the midfield marker of the lined football field. With her coat and shoes off now she was vengeful. As she approached me the broad bases of her breasts bobbed suddenly and I felt the unavoidable stiffness against my cold pant leg.

"Your feet, aren't they cold?" I asked not meekly. No answer.

"Let's go peg some cars from behind the hedge," was the suggestion from a being whose two eyes were all that were visible from the coated darkness, away from the urgency of the mighty school field spotlight.

"Don't you want to head over to Marcus' party?" I needed a beer in my hand. Lorna leaned closer to me with a smile thirty years old and pressed her bowed upper torso against me; in her hand hung the other can of shave cream, unused.

We kissed and I supported her reckless weight. She was sluggish to move and heavy on me, yet like a big cat she was purring in repose. We left the angry field.

Out the window of the car Lorna pelted masked children with the eggs she brought from home. They scurried off the street with their pillowcases filled with young Halloween's sweet worth. Lorna was vicious yet I was on her side; she was crusty yet young. I felt like her father driving the family's car — inactive except for possessing all control.

Lorna slid over on the seat next to me and placed her head in my crotch. I began to laugh loosely until she began to moan and warm spit

soaked through to my skin. An egg suddenly spat across the windshield and Lorna jerked up as if she had been summoned once more to react on her somewhere conceived ideal that Halloween meant vigilance. I cleaned it off with a rag I had groped for under the seat and we were going to Marcus' party.

The beer cartons were now empty, the last beer between my legs. Lorna sat up straight in the passenger seat. She had reached a lull. I thought it might have been Marcus' recalling of how Mrs. Layton had behaved at previous parties that had silently agitated Lorna. She had finished an entire six pack of beer and then one other bottle. I dared not apologize for Marcus' comments. Enough had been said. Maybe she hadn't felt it. Mrs. Layton's behavior was common knowledge, neighborhood chatter. No one was offended by her loudness. Mr. Layton found her humorous; he never made excuses for her. Once at a cookout for the Beach Association Mrs. Layton was talking to a bunch of my friends and some of the lifeguards at the beach. I remember she had her arms around two of them. Mr. Layton was working the grill and said nothing to her except to ask her what she wanted on her burger. He served it to her politely, gave her another drink and went back to cooking. It was common to see her with other men her age, being dropped off or having lunch. Mrs. Layton once owned a shop on the "row" and kept the acquaintance of many of the store owners in the area even after she had sold her boutique. The Laytons never fought with each other, at least not where anybody could see.

As we drove through the oak-lined streets of our town, I could sense a hurried rush of cars in one general direction. I figured a bunch of kids got caught spray painting a wall or a building side. Perhaps the guys I had turned down in order to go out with Lorna got snagged.

I rounded the corner to Lorna's block. Parallel to the familiar cars of the neighbors attending the Layton's party were police cars, four of them with their lights snapping in silent blue strobe, persistent against the houses, making their appearance as surreal as randomly strewn toilet tissue upon an autumn landscape or the incongruous mounds of textured white foam on decaying leaves.

I parked as close as I could to the sturdy brick house which was Lorna's. The people surrounding the house — the whole neighborhood and a handful

of trick-or-treaters out in the night with glitter capes and brittle plastic Frankenstein masks—gaped at us as if we were victims of a severe torture. I heard my mother's voice for a splintered second.

Marcus' car was in front also. I threw my last beer into the bushes of the adjacent house and crossed the street. Police lined the sidewalk to Lorna's house—a respectably dead white brick house set back on marble pillared haunches.

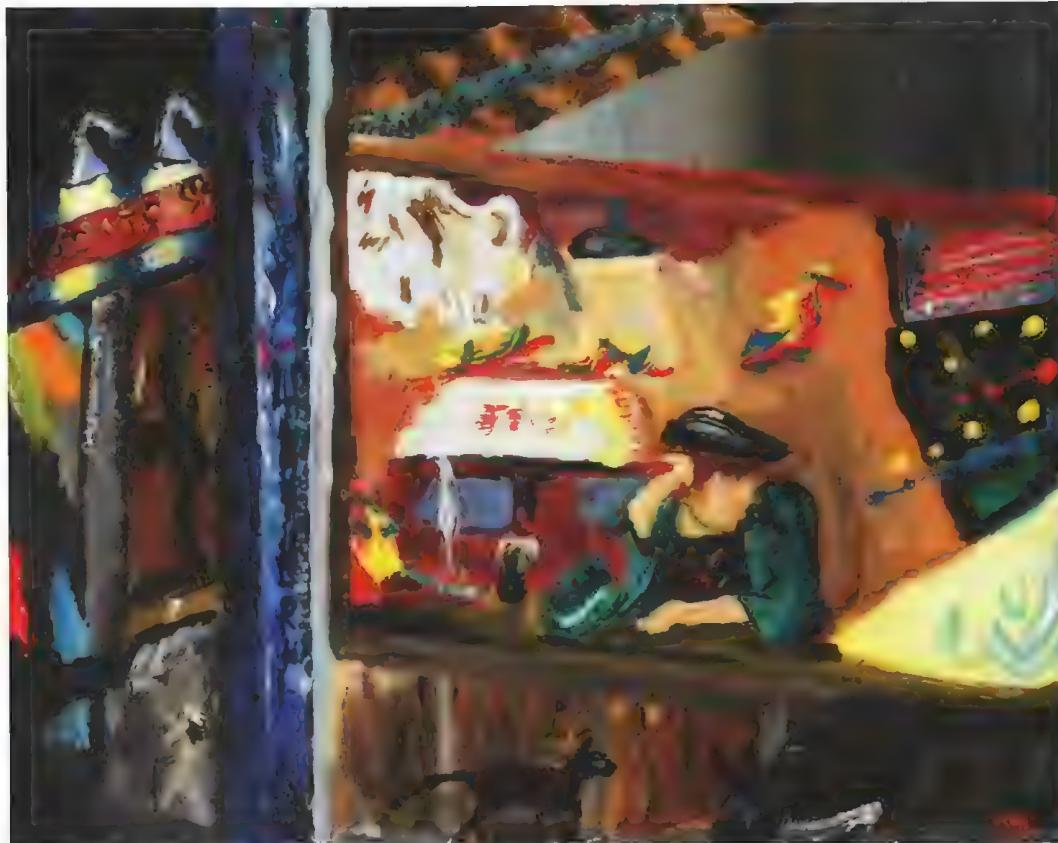
"Marcus, what is it? What's happened here? Is anyone hurt?" I asked as a cop passed by requesting an ambulance to another man in a suit. I felt a fraying hot tingle under my ribs as I inhaled.

"It's Lorna's mom," Marcus said. "Mr. Layton hit her so hard she hasn't recovered. She was in another room with Mr. Sigler. When Mr. Layton came in to get some cognac in a cabinet, he found

them both. He just kept hitting her." I flashed behind to Lorna, hoping defensively she hadn't heard any of it, then back to Marcus in disbelief.

Marcus continued: "'He hit her so hard she didn't wake up. The police are trying to find Mr. Sigler. He ran. Mr. Layton's in one of those cop cars over there.' Marcus' persistence in producing facts had not diminished, not even in the light of all this.

I looked back at Lorna behind me. She was faceless, etherized, noiseless. I said I was sorry. Lorna shrieked and I hugged her in restraint, wrapping all my weight around her. I was warm and slid off my coat. Lorna held me tighter and for a slicing instant I pressed myself against her warmth. Mom's voice pierced the murmur of the sidewalk once more. The Bonneville was right there, parked on the curb next to us behind Marcus' car.



*Jay Kennedy, "Reflective Glass / Black Cats," Oil on Canvas
First appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2006.*

Eve of Spring

by Sara Letourneau

Spring begins tomorrow.
You'd think it had already arrived after
a winter of little snow or cold.
I didn't notice;
this year, winter raged in my soul.

Loss of friends, death of a loved one—
they brought winds that cut through
my bones
and summoned tears. I stayed indoors,
having no desire
to reach out to others
yet yearning to be reached.

What a waste of time and life.
Self-pity, I've learned, only means
more suffering
the longer you let it snow on you.

So I will end this season now. When I wake
in the morning, even if the hurt
lingers, I will run out the door
with every inch of me open
to greet the sun. I will stop to lean down
and comb the earth with my fingers
and smell its dampness. I will find
the nearest gazebo and then visit it again
during a rainstorm, so I can watch
nature's madness at work.

And, I will smile
at more strangers and bid them "hello."
Everyone longs
to be acknowledged like the first flower
of March—
as if they're coming home,
as if their presence matters to at least
one living person.

So do I—and that will happen
once the season changes outside and within.



A.D.D. Analysis

by Jane (O'Connor) Deering Fish

"A.D.D. Analysis" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2004.

weeding through creativity,

creating a wise study,

studying my distraction,

distracting my construction.

asking mom and dad
to ease nightly drinking,
being told to mind my business.
I won't repeat their history.

mixing greens with oranges,
believing in weed and Adderall,
concocting my own prescription,
cracking out plus stoning in,
speeding up then slowing down.

constructing a diversion,

diverting the denial,

denying History

Repeats.

Blunted

by Alan Flamenhaft

"Blunted" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2002.

In thinking back on the important events of my life, it's ironic that an event that should have been a blur to me is one of the most vivid. I was sixteen at the time, and that summer was amazing. No more riding around on bikes or hanging out around the Seven-Eleven; I was going places. I had just gotten my junior license, and the fact that I couldn't drive past nine didn't even faze the feeling of complete liberty. Being able to drive was the best—especially in upstate New York where there wasn't much to do without a car. However, there was a catch: responsibility. At this point in my life I could barely spell responsibility, let alone comprehend the meaning of it. So basically, my parents handing over the keys to my very own black Honda Accord was the equivalent of taking someone from AA to a night at the bar. When it comes to driving, we are all programmed, or at least we should be. When we see the color green, we keep going, and when we see red, we come to a halt. However, yellow is thrown into the mix, and a decision has to be made to stop or speed up. This X-factor of sorts and others like it have altered people's lives indiscriminately, for better or worse, since the beginning of time. On that glorious Sunday afternoon, I chose to slow down for the yellow and stop.

It was only three weeks before school was about to start, and my parents had been arguing for a week straight. They wanted to attend my stepfather's college reunion in Ohio but couldn't agree on whether or not to leave me home alone for the weekend. It went back and forth for a while, and each time they decided one way or the other, I kept my reactions neutral so as not to ruin my chances. Eventually they decided to risk it and have a friend of the family check up on me now and then. At the time I really couldn't fathom their brave decision, nor did I care to. The point remained the same. For a whole weekend I had the place to myself! The possibilities were endless. I could partake of my deviant ways without having to sneak around my parents. The first two nights were a lot of fun; all my friends came over and we partied. It wasn't over the top. I didn't let kids smoke inside the house, and nothing ended up trashed.

On Sunday morning I woke up and was in a state of straight denial. The weekend had gone by too fast, and I didn't want it to end. My parents had said they were coming home around three, but I was alert for a sneak attack. In hindsight, I wish they had done just that—seen beer cans everywhere and grounded me on the spot. In a rush to get out of the house, I called my friend, Corey, and we made plans to get some weed and go to the movies. I threw away all the beer cans and incriminating evidence faster than Mr. Clean himself. Then, I double-checked the whole house just to be certain I wouldn't get a 911-page in the movies because they had found something stupid.

I swung open my front door with a real passion, simply because I could take my car out and not have to tell my parents exactly where I was going. I went around the side of my house and opened the garage, stopping to stare in amazement that this beautiful creature was mine. I hopped in, blasted the local rap station, and took off down the road three houses to pick up Corey. His mom, as usual, was hot on his tail, interrogating him with her outrageous high-pitched squeal. He had learned well from the beast, though, because his bark was louder, and she subsided. Corey was just as excited as I was to be getting out of our neighborhood. Besides, whenever we would go out, I would always be real paranoid because my parents hated him for being such a bad influence.



Samantha Carr. "Hope," Black and white digital photography

This meant they wanted him nowhere near the car that they had bought me. I always knew Corey was wild and would throw caution to the wind at any moment. He was my friend though, and he helped keep our neighborhood alive with one adventure or another. Besides, whenever my parents would complain about him, I would tell them what I knew to be true: individuals make their own decisions, not their friends.

We were headed to a friend of Corey's who sold weed. I pulled onto some dirt road and saw his friend outside shooting hoops. As soon as he saw the car pull down the driveway, he fired a turnaround jumper and started walking toward the car. Once he got to the **passenger-side** window, he showed Corey the bag and **negotiations** began. Corey, weighing the bag with his eyes, said, "Yo, John, how you gonna play me like that. I have known you since when? And you can't hook it up?" John played dumb for a while, acting like he was giving him a fat bag, but Corey could be real persuasive when it was in his best interests, and John gave up.

With the extra nuggs in the bag, we had enough to roll a real "Godfather" blunt, especially between only two people. I pulled into a shopping complex with a ShopRite and Home Depot in it, and we parked. The parking lot wasn't packed at

all, and I couldn't tell at the time if that was a good thing or a bad thing. After Corey had rolled up the whole bag, except a nickel's worth, into a blunt, he licked it, sealed and toasted it with his lighter, and we took a second to admire this giant masterpiece of weed and cigar paper. Next, all four windows and sunroof were closed, and we were ready to bake. Corey held the lighter, coaxing the blunt to take fire and produce dragon-like puffs. It did, and by the time it went around twice in a puff-puff-give fashion, the inside of the car looked as clear as a sandstorm. A couple of hits later, with the blunt still raging, my rear view mirror started playing games with my head. I would keep seeing cars of all sorts driving by, and all of them looked like cops at first. Corey started to laugh at my run-in with paranoia. At first I was pissed, but then I started to laugh with him. The blunt was still burning slow like a champ, but I saw that we didn't have much time to get to the movies. I let down all the windows, and we jumped out of the car to see how much smoke we had actually filled it with. As delighted as we were, I hated going to the movies late, so we got in the car and took off. The rest is history.

I didn't realize how fucked-up I was until I got on the three-lane road and was actually driving. I had never been this high in my whole life, but I felt

my driving was impeccable, so I kept smoking. I was having a blast cruising around in the warm weather. We were making jokes to each other about people in other cars, and checking out girls. I felt like I was on top of the world, but I was oblivious to the trouble to come. I stopped at a light turning yellow, just to be safe since we were smoking. The decision seemed like a good call, but it ended up being that one split-second factor that changed everything. At the light I handed the blunt to Corey, and he hit on it very obviously, like we were driving around in Jamaica, but I didn't care. Then I locked eyes with some guy directly to the right of me in his early thirties who was with a younger-looking woman in his car. He looked away but then did a double take. Just as the light turned green and I sped off, I heard him say something. I was glad that the light had turned green and I didn't have to hear whatever this guy had to offer. All of a sudden, I looked in the rear view mirror and the guy was right on my bumper honking with a frantic rhythm. Then he started waving a badge out of the window, and I knew this was trouble. I started to panic and had to take deep breaths not to flip out. Corey tried to convince me to outrun him, but I refused to. This was partly because I was praying he would let us go, but more importantly, my whole body was frozen in fear. Corey threw the blunt out of the window, and I pulled into a Mobil gas station. The guy and the girl took their sweet time getting out of the car and over to my window.

His first words to me were, "How fucking high are you? Smoking weed, driving on Route 9 on a Sunday afternoon?" As the weed smell wafted from my car, the best response I could come up with was, "I'm not high. I was just smoking a cigarette." They immediately called for uniformed cops. Two cruisers pulled into the gas station. The cop asked us where the weed was, and we told him there wasn't any, hoping they wouldn't find the rest of the bag under the passenger seat. Then he brought two police dogs over and told us that if we didn't tell him, we would get in even more trouble. I finally caved, realizing the dogs would sniff it out. Once they retrieved the bag and a homemade honey bear bowl I had in my car, they threw us up against the back of the car. Corey started talking back to him with the swagger of the cop's son that he was. With this supposed force field protecting him, Corey

went all out and acted as if he were Scarface himself. This **didn't** stop any of the cops who ended up smacking his hat off him and breaking his pager on the concrete. His dad never got mad when he heard about the treatment. I guess when someone acts up the way Corey did, it's pretty much procedure to give him a hard time right back.

Once the handcuffs were placed on me, and my rights were read, claustrophobia kicked in big-time. I hated having my hands restricted, and I had an itch on my face that was killing me. I looked up and couldn't believe all the cars passing by, seeing me getting arrested. All of the sudden, my brain seemed to see everything like a slide show; each picture was the facial expression of someone I knew who could have been driving by at that very second and seeing this fiasco. Then one of the cops grabbed my arm and led me into the back seat of the cruiser, which was not an easy task. The worst part was that the handcuffs started to cut into my wrists from sitting on them. This new, more uncomfortable position of captivity sent a whole second wave of claustrophobia over my mind and body. However, I managed to take deep breaths and be remotely happy that I was being shielded from the public's eye. Then I was lulled into a deep trance, watching the scenery crawl by as I was being carted off. This was when I turned around to see Corey next to me with his usual crazy look. We both started to completely crack up, to the cop's disbelief. The weird thing about it is that I don't remember it even being a nervous laugh. We were just really high, and the whole thing seemed like a joke or a dream. I still didn't fully comprehend what was happening. Instead of dealing with the situation, I chose to stay in my cave. I guess it was easier to remain comfortably numb than to realize the mess I had gotten myself into.

When we were brought into the station, all the police seemed to have already heard about our stupidity, and each one had some smart-ass remark. We were immediately taken to different rooms and fingerprinted. I was chained to a wall in some small room. It seemed like I was alone in there forever. All my mind could think about was, "What if there is a fire and they forget about me?" Then my high started to come down rapidly, and reality kicked in. I just kept thinking that I hoped to God they would let me out, and I wouldn't have to call my parents. The

detective eventually came in and asked me where we got the weed. I told him that we had gotten it from some guy on Main Street. I guess he didn't believe me because, next, he tried to set me up. He told me that Corey had said I forced him into the car and had made him smoke weed. I wasn't taking the bait, and I stuck to my story about Main Street, where a lot of people do sell weed off the block. Then he and another officer proceeded to exaggerate the trouble I was in, telling me that my parents could lose the car because it was a drug-seize. They also told me they hadn't decided whether or not to charge me with a DUI, and that if they did, I wouldn't be able to drive again until I was twenty. When they began to tell me about a possible one-year jail term, I was starting to lose it, but managed to fight back the tears. Even though I knew some stuff about the law, at age sixteen, I was still scared and confused. I felt like the biggest idiot in the world. I couldn't get over how disappointed and outraged my parents were going to be. I thought about them losing the car and how that would be an even bigger slap in the face for having trusted me. Thinking about all this made me want to hide out in jail forever and not show my face to anyone; I was truly ashamed.

The moment came after about two hours chained to the wall. They had to make the call that I couldn't bear to witness. It was the worst feeling in the world reading my parents' reactions off the detective's face while he was relaying the news over the phone. For someone who did this all the time, his face looked surprisingly uncomfortable during the conversation, and he even cringed at one point. This just made me even more sick to my stomach, thinking about what my parents were saying as the cop was trying to get off the phone. My parents were good people and were probably completely shocked at the fact that their corn-fed son had managed to get arrested. The detective finally hung up the phone and shook his head at me in sorrow for my poor parents. Then he left the room and came back after a while to inform me that Corey's dad, the cop, had picked Corey up and he was free. I was angry that I was still there, alone, but then again, I wasn't really looking forward to my parents' arrival.

Through the wall, I could hear that my parents had arrived at the station, but I couldn't see them. The detective was explaining the facts, and he asked whether my parents wanted to bail me out or let me

sweat out a couple of nights in jail. There was dead silence for a little while. Then I heard my mom say, "Leave him in for the night. Maybe it'll teach him a lesson." My heart sank. I couldn't believe that my own mother, flesh and blood, was willing to let her only child stay in this hellhole. Fortunately, my step-dad interjected and said, "Jean, we can't leave him in here; they'll eat him alive, even for one night." So they paid the bail. Finally, I was free from the wall, but now, I had to see them face-to-face. When I was escorted back into the station, they kept their cool, bulging veins and all. But when we got into the parking lot, it was a different story. It was the longest yelling spree I have ever endured, and the storm wasn't showing any signs of letting up.

At home, after several hours, they calmed down a little and discussed the fact that my arrest was serious, indeed, for a young kid. The night went on and they kept flipping out, telling me how everything was going to be "a whole hell of a lot different" in my life. I knew they weren't kidding. Then they must have felt sorry for me, seeing the reality of these consequences soaking in, because they let my girlfriend come over for the night. Before doing this, however, they guaranteed me that it would be a long time before I would see her again.

The next morning, I woke up positive that the whole thing had been a nightmare. I came downstairs like a little kid at Christmas, anxious to find out whether I had been good this year or was getting coal. But there was no mistaking it; I had screwed up big time.

I wasn't allowed to go out for the next three weeks and was forced into hard labor around the house. When school started, my parents still had me on lock down and didn't ease up for a long time. They ended up selling my car. Court went well, on the other hand. I only lost my license for six months, but I ended up not driving either of my parents' cars for a year. The court also assigned mandatory drug counseling and fifty hours of community service. I felt the punishment that had been dished out by the court wasn't too severe. They struck a good balance between scaring me and not ruining my life.

This whole event changed the person I am today in many ways. Before being arrested, I thought that freedom was having the house to myself, instead of something people died for. When

I was in those handcuffs and in custody, I felt like the cops could do whatever they pleased with me and that I had no rights whatsoever. I had always taken being a free citizen for granted. For the first time, I saw, up close, boundaries in the land of the free and home of the brave. I wasn't invincible any more. I realized that even a spoiled white boy is not exempt from consequences.

However this has changed me as a person, it changed my family's parenting of me ten times more. They became extremely strict, and I had to fight my way just for air. I was no longer the shining light, only son of my mother. I couldn't be trusted. I realized that trust was fragile and, once broken, could not ever be fully repaired. Their new view of me was what really killed me; I felt it right in my heart. I wasn't someone they knew anymore. Part of me was a stranger to them, and their disillusionment from that time still stays with me.

I can't really say that, ever since this incident, I have been transformed into a choirboy. I also never thought that I was such a bad person for smoking dope. I don't think that smoking is that big of a deal. Compared to a lot of the problems out there, it almost seems trivial. However, the way this incident made me view myself has proven to be a crucial factor in my life. It showed me directly that I was responsible for my actions and that being a carefree teenager did not make me bulletproof from the rest of society. In a way, I'm glad I learned this when I did, and that the ramifications were not too severe. Ever since that summer day, not by choice, but by habit, I think twice about the situations I put myself in, and that has made all the difference. So in looking back, maybe fate didn't screw me over as much as I thought at that yellow light that begged me to fly through.



Philip Cunningham, "Cardinals Feeding," Digital Photograph

Toxicity behind the Smile

by Brittany Capozzi

"Toxicity behind the Smile" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2008.

The facial expression of a loved one paints itself into a joyful grin, but beware because behind it may be where the voiceless lies hide.

When you glance at your reflection in the mirror do you see yourself as someone else? Do the lines around your eyes show wisdom that is inevitably aging, or do they unmask fresh lies from the core of your heart? There's an apparent similarity between you and the mirror; both seem to be withering away into a different image. You attempt to polish the picture, but it's not so easy, is it? To obliterate what is seen at the surface does not omit what is seared on the inside.

Yet, you smile.

Labeling is a negative judgment call, but you are indeed known as a "Good Guy." Do those favors you offer truly stay fresh or have they gone stale? You keep busy day after day, season after season. Your patience grows thinner, turning into a single thread through the years, as does time.

Still, you smile.

As unsentimental as you are, you ironically corner your secret of hurting, too, don't you? Hurting...not yourself but those close to you.

Your footprints have been scarred into my backbone, making the full support I once had shatter into fragments of neglect.

You smile.

Do you believe in the perfect love coming to an end? No evidence has shown that it does; however, the passing of time clarifies that it happens to the best of us. Marriages evaporate into thin air these days as puppy love denies itself years later. Or does it? Does the love for something created evanesce?

You keep your smile, while deceitfully appearing honest.

Just because the words are not written on the blank page doesn't mean they are not there in your mind. Keep smiling, show off your pearly, "polished" teeth. Let the clown mask drown out your thoughts so I won't hear them.

But I do.

As I distance myself from you,
I too smile.

Chapter Eight of the Novella *Dark Falls*

by Jillian DeSousa

Dark Falls was exactly as the name suggests—dark.

Of course, that could be attributed to the fact that it was raining and eight o'clock at night. But even if the sun were shining, it could still be spooky.

There was something too perfect about it, like a movie set. The quiet street, the quaint town square dotted with shops and restaurants, and the beautiful colonial and Victorian houses standing on top of well-kept lawns. It had an eerie feel to it.

Within fifteen minutes of entering the town, I find the hotel, named Falls Into Bed Inn (cheesy name) and park my car. I notice I'm one of maybe five cars in the parking lot.

A bell tinkled above me as I pushed the front door open, wheeling my suitcase behind me and carrying my computer bag over my shoulder. The clerk, a young man in his early twenties, was clearly surprised to see me. Obviously, Dark Falls doesn't get too many out-of-town guests.

As I was checking in, the clerk, whose tag read Bradley, looked at my ID and said, "You're from Boston?"

I nodded. "Yes."

"Cool," he said. "I love Boston. I applied to BU but didn't get in, though. Mind if I ask what you're doing in Dark Falls?"

"On business," I replied. I examined him. His smile was open and trusting. He looked close to Lily's age. And, to be honest, he kind of looked like a dweeb. He would certainly notice if such a pretty new girl came to town.

"My name is Ambrose Darnell. I'm a private investigator," I told Bradley, showing my badge. His eyebrows rose in surprise and excitement. "I'm here for a missing person's case I'm working on." I pulled out my cellphone and showed him Lily's picture. "This girl here. Have you ever seen her before?"

"Yeah," he said. "I've seen her, or someone that looks like her anyway. Her name is Arabella."

"Arabella?"

"Yeah, she moved out here about two years ago. Really cute, but quiet. She hangs out mostly with Delilah."

"Delilah Devine?"

Bradley nodded again. "Everyone knows Delilah. Her uncle owns half the town and her

aunt knows everybody and their brother by name."

"Do you know where I could find Arabella?" I asked as he handed me my room key.

"She works at a restaurant a few blocks from here," he replied. "Stackhouse's. I think she's there pretty much every night."

She had dyed her hair what my niece Madison would call "Sleeping Beauty blond," but it was definitely her.

The sight of Lily Cullen—or Arabella Rothschild, as Bradley the clerk called her—helped me to forget the growling in my stomach and remind me why I was in Dark Falls to begin with.

The hostess smiled welcomingly when I approached the front of the restaurant, surreptitiously watching Lily.

"New in town?" the hostess asked politely.

"Yes," I said. "Business. Uh, do you mind if I have a table over there?" I nodded towards the section Lily appeared to be working.

"Sure, not a problem," she said, grabbing a menu from inside the podium. "Follow me."

My eyes were still on Lily as the hostess led me to a table, one with a view of the mountains in the distance, as she babbled on about potential sightseeing opportunities in the area. I vaguely replied to her questions, my focus mainly on Lily/Arabella.

She's here. She's alive. But what the hell is she doing here? Why hasn't she gone to see her mother?

"Bella will be taking care of you tonight," the hostess said as I sat down, throwing my jacket onto the back of the chair. "Let me know if you need anything."

"Will do. Thank you."

I pretended to be observing the menu—which was pretty thick when I was actually watching the girl. I'm not sure what to call her. Lily or Arabella?

But when she finally started making her way towards me, I noticed something I hadn't before: how beautiful she is.

From the pictures I'd seen, I knew Lily was

pretty. Only seeing her now, not as a face on a missing person's flyer...it was hard to describe what I felt. I chalked it up to "all guys being pigs" and the uncomfortable reminder that I haven't paid a visit to anyone's bed in a while.

"Hi," she said, smiling as she approached my table. "I'm Bella. I'll be taking care of you tonight. Can I get you something to drink to start?"

"Coke, if you have it," I said. "And, can I order an entrée, too, while I'm at it, Lily?"

"Sure, what would you—" she paused, blood draining from her face. "Wh-what did you call me?"

I rested my elbows on the table, leaning in, locking my eyes with hers. "Lily," I repeated. "That's your name, isn't it? Or do you go by Arabella now? Personally, I think Lily is much prettier, but I guess we all have our own preferences, don't we?"

"I have no idea of what you're talking about," she said coolly. "Your drink will be out shortly."

Several minutes later she came back with my drink, placing it down in front of me (along with customary biscuits) and avoiding eye contact with me. She muttered, "What can I get you?" under her breath. Her hands were visibly shaking.

"The American style burger, well-done, everything on it, with onion rings," I said, playing along, trying to keep her calm. As she was writing it down, I added. "Your mother was the one who hired me to find you. She wants to see you. You know she doesn't have much time left, right?"

"I will be back with your order," she said, her expression blank.

Did Lily/Arabella honestly think that, even with today's technology, she could never be found? That I, Ambrose Darnell, a man eleven years older than she with a PI license and keen determination and work ethic, would not be able to find her? After two years, she was starting to let her guard down.

When Lily/Arabella came back with my

burger and onion rings, I tried again, this time with more tact. "Hon," I said gently. "I know about Oliver Duncan." I saw her shoulders tense. "I know about the crap he put you through two years ago. I'm here because your mother asked me to find you. She...."

A loud crash as she dropped the silverware on the table. She glared down at me, her eyes a blazing blue fire. People were staring, but neither of us noticed.

"My name is not Lily," she whispered, almost sounding menacing. "It's Bella. Stay away from me...you don't know what I'm capable of." She then threw the check down on my lap, signaling my leave, before stomping off, two of her co-workers watching her in shocked surprise then glancing back at me confused.

I stared after "Bella," anger slowly simmering in my gut.

I've come this far, Bella, Lily, whoever the hell you are, I thought, my eyes narrowing. I'm not backing out now.

I paid for my dinner (which wasn't all that great) and left a ten dollar tip (because my parents raised a gentleman). "Bella" apparently decided to leave early. I waited exactly ten minutes before following her out the front door. Going out the back would be too suspicious.

I had come to Stackhouse's in my car. I slipped into the driver's seat of my Buick, my eyes open for Bella and, moments later, she stepped out of the restaurant, still in her waitress uniform. She looked from side to side, obviously looking for me, before strapping her handbag over her shoulder and walking towards a silver Acura three parking spots to the left of mine.

Once she pulled out of the parking lot, I followed, but not too closely. I didn't want to spook her again.

Part of me was asking, *Why the hell are you doing this? Just go home. Go back to taking pictures of cheating husbands and ignoring the drunken text messages from your ex. Go back to normal. Just tell Nora what she wants to hear and be done with it.*

I don't recall Nora specifically saying to

bring Lily to her. But my conscience told me that that a woman on her deathbed—not to mention Jenny and Paula and all those other people in Lily Cullen's life—deserved an explanation from this girl. It cannot only be about Oliver Duncan....

I was so deep in thought I almost missed the turn Lily/Bella took. I turned sharply, keeping my distance but still following her. Another right turn about two miles later, and we entered what was obviously the wealthier section of Dark Falls.

From what I had seen of the town so far, it was an all an upper-middle-class population, with lovely two-story houses and Toyotas in the driveway. Only the houses on this street—with their extravagant architecture and stone statues on the front lawns—could clearly be classified, in my mind, as palaces.

Lily/Bella pulled into the driveway of the house at the end of the street. I parked my car a few feet away, behind a long line of cars attending a party at another house, and walked the rest of the block to where she was.

As I got closer, the girl seemed to sense something behind her as she got out of the car. She spun around. When she saw me, her eyes widened in surprise, anger, and even fear.

What does she have to be afraid of?

"You!" she practically screeched. "What the hell are you doing here?"

"Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Ambrose Darnell. I'm from Boston."

"Did you follow me here?"

"No, I teleported here by accident."

"What do you want?"

"Your mother sent me," I said. "You know, Nora Cullen, the one slowly dying of lung cancer in the ICU at Boston General? The one who thinks you're dead?"

The girl's already white face lightened a few more shades. She then recomposed herself, standing up straight, looking me directly in the eyes as if she were my height, though she only got as far as my chest.

"I left Boston a long time ago," she said firmly. "And I'm not going back." She turned

her back on me again, heading towards the house. "Just leave, please."

"You called her before, did you not?" I asked, striding to keep up with her. I tried to step in front of her, but she worked her way around me. "It wasn't a problem for you three months ago."

"It was a mistake," Lily/Bella said, still walking to the house, her eyes focused solely on the front door.

"Look here, kid," I commanded. My voice caught her off guard. She stopped walking. "I didn't drive here for two hours and sit stuck for twenty minutes on a highway to play games with you."

"You found me didn't you?" she demanded, facing me again. "What more do you want? You did your job."

"One thing you will learn about me, sweetheart," I said condescendingly, "is that I keep my promises. It builds good karma. And when I make a promise to a cancer-stricken woman who drives to my office in the center of downtown Boston, on a brisk April afternoon, and coughs up blood on my desk, begging me to find her daughter before she kicks the bucket, and I tell her I will, I take that shit seriously."

"Bella" takes a deep breath, holds it, and then lets it out slowly. Her eyes are bright, just like her mother's were in the hospital yesterday.

"Why can't you leave me alone?" she begged. "Do yourself and my mother a favor and go. Please, I—"

"Arabella?"

We both looked up. Standing in the shadow of the front doorway was a woman—a striking, inhumanly gorgeous woman.

She came down the polished stone steps like a lioness, limbs long and graceful, hips shaking predatorily. Her face was smooth and white, with minimal makeup, save for the bright red lipstick. Her nails were French-manicured yet sharp-looking, as if they could tear the clothes right off my back. The woman reached behind her head and untied her tight bun, releasing a mane of

thick, brightly red hair.

"Elizabeth," Arabella said, swallowing.

So, this is Elizabeth Calabrese. The woman Eric Portman said would be hiding Lily. He led me right to her.

Elizabeth smiled up at me. "Well, Arabella," she said, casting a look at the younger woman who had slightly shrunk away. "Are you not going to introduce me to your new friend?" She held out her hand, and I took it. Her skin felt cool to the touch.

"Ambrose Darnell, ma'am," I said. "I'm from Boston. Here on business."

"Ambrose," Elizabeth cooed. "Such a handsome name for a very handsome man. Very masculine, too. And no one here calls me ma'am. It's Elizabeth." Her smile widened, revealing sharp canines. "Or Lizzie, whichever is your preference. Mind if I ask why you are here? How long will you be staying?"

"He was about to leave," Arabella interrupted, flashing me a look, teeth barred. "Right now."

"Why, Arabella," Elizabeth tsk-tsked. "Where are your manners? It is not very often that we have such guests in our little town." She looked at me. "Would you like to come in for coffee, Mr. Darnell? Or perhaps some red wine? I was about to open a bottle for dinner tonight."

"I would like that, Elizabeth," I flashed her my best smile, offering her my arm. "Shall we?"

She laughed merrily, eyes glittering mischievously. "We shall."

Arm in arm, we glided up the walkway, Arabella dragging behind us, her eyes on the ground, dyed blond hair curtaining her face.

Sorry honey, I thought. You're not getting rid of me that easily.

"Welcome to our home," Elizabeth said, her smile positively breathtaking, as the front door swung open into a bright light.



Samantha Carr

(Top) "Lucy & Ricky," Acrylic Paint on Wood Blocks
(Left) "Audrey," Acrylic Painting
(Right) "Inspiration," Mixed Media Accordion Book

Body Canvas

by Tricia Reinhart (Earnshaw)

"Body Canvas" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2005.

My body is a work of art,
In which I inscribe a picture
Of my love, my life, and my beliefs.
A silver stud in the most
Unusual places.
An imbedded painting, lined
Under my skin and reaching
Into my poetic nature.

The pain of the needle
Is only an inch
In the mile that I give the artist
To expand into the core in the final product.
A permanent illustration for the world to see,
But for myself to love.

The Unspoken Language of Speaking in Public

by Kathryn Barry

"The Unspoken Language of Speaking in Public" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2006.

The drumming
in my ears
beats the pulsating
beat.
My limbs
predictably
begin to perform
a tap dance.
Breathing, no longer
being effortless,
adds to my panic.
as if judgment
wasn't endured
every second
of every moment
of every day,
carried out
by means
of myself,
the biggest critic.
"Kathryn Barry..."

I am up next...
Expectant eyes
slowly turn
in my direction.

All this uncertainty:
in myself,
in my knowledge,
in who I am—
raw insecurities
for my "peers"
to judge
I am numb.

Conversation Over Tea

by Krista Selnau

"Conversation Over Tea" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2007.

'Warm water runs through her hair, trickles down her breasts to her feet and spirals down through the drain. It is the warm water which awakens her but not in the complete sense of being awakened. The various shampoos she keeps smell of pleasant fragrance, and the lit candles add to the serenity of the room. She finishes, dresses, and pauses, staring blankly at her reflection watching her from a large antique mirror, her dead face refusing to betray her.

There is a knock upon the bedroom door. Soft at first, then louder as the intruder receives no answer. "Darling ...?"

She sighs. It is he. Awakening to her senses, she answers, "Yes ... I'm just fine."

"Open please, darling?" he pleads.

"Not now. I'm busy."

"Darling, your breakfast is getting cold...your tea is no longer hot," he tries. She sighs, opens the door, and greets him with a smile and a semi-warm kiss. His embrace is awkward, and she would like to go. She does not want to be held, and she does not want to make idle talk with him. "Please..." she manages as she lightly steps away towards the kitchen containing her now cold breakfast. She looks it over and takes her seat, but eats nothing, drinks nothing.

On this bright, sunny morning her day begins. Good morning sun! Good morning creatures, nature and life! The birds are audible through the window, and even the darkest curtains couldn't keep the sun out today. Oh, but such melancholy, what is good at all? She thinks they are all good and good to her even, but she does not feel as if it may be called such. Today does not feel to her a good day, nor has any day she can remember, yet onward with such falsities and pretense she presses.

Taking the seat opposite her, he continues his idle chat concerning nothing relevant to her, stuff only important to him, mostly business and a few attempted jokes. When he talks, he is animated, using his hands mostly to express what his words cannot. Pleased with her frequent nods and semi-frequent smiles, he pauses then finishes. Preparing to speak, she leans toward him only to find him moving away.

"Kiss me darling, I'm off to work." Without pretending to kiss her or waiting to receive a kiss he rushes off to a world full of people whose useless chatter has deafened silence.

She cannot talk to that man let alone relate to him. Sometimes she tries to communicate her feelings or a particular point about a topic, but she

is silently shunned by his inexpressive face and an occasional and uninterested nod. They are not married, not engaged and not together. They have lived in the same apartment for what seems like forever, and that seems enough to constitute some sort of unspoken agreement. Every night there is sex, but it remains passionless and sour. Sour to her whole self, grating on her nerves and being, ripping a part of her from its core each time: disintegrating her from the inside. To move elsewhere is not an option; it is not even a fantasized idea. Tangled together the two have somehow become, not through love but perhaps from just being. There is no ring, yet they are equally trapped in a modern hell comparable to nothing earthly.

What is good? Today her tasks consist of nothing good. They remain virtually unchanged from the tasks of the previous day, the day before that and so forth. They are this: write. She is a writer, has been a writer, and yet has not written a thing since she moved in with him. How long ago was that? It remains hard to estimate. Each day begins as each day ends: staring nostalgically at a blank computer screen. *Golden days of youth, where have you gone! Why have you slipped through my fingers and shattered like glass on the floor? When I was not paying attention, I missed your goodbye, and you have yet to return from your long absence.* Nothing runs through her brain, nothing stimulates her senses. He has sucked from her the last drop of anything precious.

Sitting, staring, shivering, still at the kitchen table, she cannot think of a word to write. Shaking, she inadvertently knocks her cup of tea to the floor.

It shatters. The deafening roar which breaks hours of silence ceases. Remaining unmoved, unblinking her trance continues. Hypnotized by the dark liquid covering the floor, she begins to remember. Birds. Music. Laughter. In her mind plays real laughter. Happy laughter echoing off walls emanating from happy people. She sees a woman. She is wearing a blue dress and red lipstick. Arm in arm with a handsome man, she sits at a table in a faraway and exotic café sharing a joke. The woman is laughing and the man smiles, pleased. Eyes catch eyes where eyes laugh and laugh. Hands touch hands whereupon the smiling eyes notice and smile larger. She focuses in on the dark liquid and sees nothing, hears nothing. She feels nothing or rather the feeling is lost. The pleasant laughter has faded back to a repressed memory of an unmentionable time.

Somehow, somehow, she becomes aware of her surroundings. Sitting in an empty room—minus the table, chairs and various kitchen appliances—she is alone. The walls are dirty as is the floor. The room is soundless. She realizes at this precise moment, at this precise time, where she is. Alone, she senses. Utterly and completely alone, in a place devoid of any real emotion. How did she end up here? The laughter, she remembers it and places it. The woman's laughter belongs to herself, the man's to him. Happy laughter, happy eyes, happy hands. How did they become so relentlessly cruel?



Brittany Gower, "Untitled," Mixed Media

A Real Stand-Up Guy

by Matthew Hirsch

I honestly don't know why I did it. Na, that's bullshit, I know exactly why I did it. I did it because a friend asked me to do it and if I was as nice a guy as I wanted to be I knew that I would have to. Turns out, being nice isn't all it's cracked up to be. At some point, a man just has to stand up.

My former friend Daniel was a real lowlife. He wouldn't say so of course, but when I found out he was moving large amounts of pot in my car without permission he basically confirmed the fact. What bothers me more though is the stuff he actually asked permission for. And which I stupidly gave him.

He asked me to drive him out to Oakland one night so he could meet up with a girl. She was fourteen and he was nineteen. He brought a bottle of Captain Morgan's Spiced Rum to get her in the mood for what he had planned for her, if not that night then some other. I said yes, and it was disgusting that I said yes. But when I did he said I was the nicest guy he'd ever known.

"She's a real live wire man," he told me after I agreed. "Last time she and I met up, first I fucked her and then another guy fucked her and then we both fucked her together. It was awesome."

I stared ahead while I drove my car. I should admit I drive a Prius.

"Wow," I said, still looking forward, "I actually feel sorry for her."

I stopped myself mid-sentence. Didn't want to risk not being called "nice" anymore.

He laughed.

"Fuck you, dude."

He didn't want to go to her place immediately though, didn't want to get caught I think, wanted for all of the productive members of society to be asleep, all except a few of them that it seems never sleep, but I'll get to that later.

First he wanted to pick up a couple buddies of his and smoke a little. So we headed over to a gas station and met up with them. Couple of random lowlifes; their names aren't important.

As we stood around smoking in the gas station parking lot, the conversation turned to me and to my choice of transportation.

"No offense dude, but this is a faggot car," one of the guys said as he looked it over. "You gotta get rid of this thing, man."

I looked at him.

"This was my dad's graduation gift," I argued. It was true. Dad had loved the car with all his heart, and when I graduated from high school he turned to me with pride and simply handed me the key. He'd had the biggest smile on his face I've

ever seen. I'd loved the car ever since.

He laughed.

"What, you trying to lick your dad's cooch or somethin'?" another one asked.

The guys roared with laughter.

I didn't say anything. I just let them laugh at me and hump the back bumper of my dad's car in a crude imitation-fuck until Daniel told me to go get some more cigarettes. So I did.

But before I go further I think I should explain in a little bit more detail why I'm hanging out with this group of guys, since they are clearly a far cry from the pinnacle of polite society. I've never had very many friends. I'm not going to waste your time on the whole pathetic story that has been my social life over the years, but let's let it be established that it has historically been very poor. Even today what topics of conversation are or are not appropriate in a given setting are still largely a mystery to me. Put me on a stage or in some sort of professional setting I generally do better than most. Put me in a bar or a club and I go completely to shit. I usually end up getting laughed at for reasons that still escape me. And it sucks to be laughed at in that context, but when the laughs get old or people realize I'm not trying to be funny they usually ditch me and leave me alone. This has happened more times than I can remember. This has happened ever since kindergarten, that day I didn't know what the hell a stupid "Pikachu" was. And while I admit I was aware of the moral incongruity of what I was being asked to facilitate that night, I will simply argue this: to a desperate introvert, the chance of getting a friend can be a hugely powerful motivator.

They finished smoking at about eleven-thirty. Daniel said he'd pay me fifteen bucks for that night. I wasn't there for the money, but it was a nice little bonus all the same.

We drove out to Oakland, the four of us. I think the others were hoping to get a little action as well. Apparently, fourteen-year-old pussy is another powerful motivator.

We got to her place around midnight. Daniel told me to park at the end of the street and he

walked about six hundred yards to her place. I think he didn't want to risk her parents seeing my car. That guy thinks of everything. I mean everything except why he's doing it, of course. But hey if you have to ask "why" a guy is willing to jump through hoops in order to get himself some free pussy, you're either a woman or gay. For my part, I was just glad to be with a group of guys around my same age, you've already heard about why.

I saw him come back with her about ten minutes later and they stood in the street and talked for about five minutes more. I couldn't really see her in the dark. All I could see is that she was really short. Not just short, tiny. Maybe four foot nine, four foot ten inches at most. I wondered for a moment where Daniel had met her and how he had convinced her to do this. Or maybe that was what he was doing for the five minutes they were standing there. Convincing her to get into a car full of guys she didn't know. I don't know how he managed it, but she got in and we all drove off together, Daniel occasionally giving her drinks.

We drove around randomly for a while, Daniel's idea not mine, and got lost off of Fish Ranch Road. Fish Ranch Road is the sort of out of the way place where guys go to get high in private.

I hated that drive. With every high pitched laugh I heard from the back I got a steadily expanding feeling that this was a very bad idea, and Daniel played his music at full fucking blast as he gave the girl more and more booze and she laughed louder and louder. After about five minutes my head started to ache. After twenty-five it was throbbing. I fucking hated that drive.

After about forty minutes Daniel turned the volume down enough so that I could hear him.

"Alright man, pull over," he slurred. "We're gonna get this party started!"

The girl laughed. I looked into the rear-view mirror and could see that she already had her shirt off. One of the other guys in the back was staring at her tits. It was strange. The sight of a topless girl usually turns me on. The sight of that one made me sick.

I saw a stop sign up ahead. But I didn't get ready to stop. Out of nowhere, just how awful this was hit me with enough force that I seriously wondered if I should do it. And as I thought about what I could do and if I stood a chance if it came to a fight, my foot hovered above the brake until we had coasted through. Almost immediately a cop flipped on his siren and pulled in behind us outta nowhere. The girl screamed. The rum spilled everywhere.

"Rob! You fucking moron!" Daniel yelled at me. I wondered just how drunk he was. "Floor it!" he barked, and I guessed he was extremely drunk.

I drove just long enough for the girl to get her jacket zipped up, which considering the amount of rum she'd consumed didn't take as many tries as I thought it would. Then I pulled over to the side and the cop got out and walked over. Everyone went dead quiet.

"Don't say anything," Daniel hissed at me. I swallowed and tried to think. My head felt like a punching bag. God help me but that music was awful. The cop was only a few feet away.

He came up to my window and shined his flashlight on me. I tried to look back without blinking, didn't manage to.

"License and registration please," he ordered. I gave it to him and he checked it.

"Sir, do you know why I pulled you over?"

"Yes, officer, I'm very sorry."

Suddenly his nostrils dilated and he sniffed the air coming out of the car.

"Have you been drinking tonight?"

"No, sir."

The cop looked at each of my passengers and then the fourteen-year-old girl. His flashlight fell on her.

"Have any of you been drinking tonight?"

No one answered.

"Alright, all of you out of the car."

I unbuckled my seatbelt and so did everyone else, those of us who were wearing them anyway. The cop stepped back a few steps and we all got out. I was pretty sure he knew what was going on.

Four guys and one girl in a car past midnight, a car reeking of booze, even an idiot would have had an idea.

The cop drew out a breathalyzer and approached me.

"Breathe into this please."

I obeyed. The cop moved on to the next person and repeated the order. We all blew into the breathalyzer. The cop rechecked it before coming back up the line to me again.

"Sir, did you know that several of your passengers are intoxicated?"

I thought fast. Damn, it hurt to think.

"Yes, sir. Actually I'm... I'm the designated driver."

"Is there an open bottle of alcohol in the vehicle?"

"I don't think so, sir."

"Unlock the car please."

The car was already unlocked but I unlocked it again anyway.

The cop peered in on the driver's side then moved around to the back. Suddenly he straightened up.

"Hands behind your back, now."

The handcuffs felt like ice. They cut deep into my wrists as the two random lowlifes scurried away into the roadside brush and the cop's partner jumped out of the police car and tore off after them.

At the police station the cop took us to a waiting room and told us to sit down and shut up. First though we were searched. That was a pleasant experience. Really, I've always dreamt of a complete stranger putting his hand up my crotch. Then we were handcuffed again and put into a holding cell. I looked down at the floor. I didn't feel like talking. My head still hurt like hell. I wanted to cover my face with my hands, but they were still cuffed behind my back.

"Dude, why did you unlock the car?"

I looked up, it was Daniel. His hands were cuffed behind his back too, same with the girl. The two lowlifes had gotten away.

"Why did you unlock the car? You didn't

have to unlock the car!"

I looked back down at the floor. My head was hurting too much for this.

"I mean it man! The fourth amendment! No unreasonable searches or seizures! You didn't have to let him in! Why the fuck did you let him in?!"

I shook my head and wondered at the sheer improbability. A junkie who knows constitutional law? Just what exactly are the odds?

"Ok, when he calls you in, say that we were coming from a party and you were the designated driver. And we don't know anything about that bottle, or the weed. You had it before we got in there because you're a fucking drunk and you got stupid. Shouldn't be too bad. Probably just a fine or something. You can afford it. Big Prius fucker like you." He laughed.

I looked up at him.

"The weed?" I asked.

He smiled a slight, open-mouthed smile as he looked down at the girl between us. She looked down at the floor and didn't say anything. I looked down at her too.

"Oh god," I whispered.

I turned away and closed my eyes gently. There was nothing I could do about it now.

"Dude? Did you hear me? We don't know anything. Alright?"

I looked at him. He was smiling. God damn it. He was smiling.

"Fuck you, Dan," I growled, "Go to fucking hell."

His smile vanished. His mouth fell open. I could hear his little heart pounding in his chest.

"Dude, do you know what's going to happen? Do you have any idea what's going to happen?"

I smirked, "Yeah, I do."

"Please don't tell them." I looked down. It was the girl. "Please, don't tell them anything. Just say you were the designated driver. You're a good guy. They'll believe you."

I dropped my eyes down to her shoes but kept my head turned towards her. I was thinking about what I would do when the cop called me in, and what I would say to her now.

I don't believe in fortune telling. Actually I think it's a scam. And I kind of like what the Italian Renaissance poet Dante did to fortune tellers in his version of hell. You know, the Inferno. According to him anybody who claims to be able to predict the future from crystal balls or playing cards or bat feces or whatever gets to walk through hell for all eternity with their heads screwed on backwards. All the same in that moment I could see (or at least imagine) a little of her immediate future. I had a choice. I could either tell the cops the truth or give to them the lie and I tried to imagine the most likely outcome of both decisions. The first that I considered was of my telling the truth.

I could see the girl's mom, dad or both marching into the police station in an hour or two looking like they'd just rolled out of bed. I could see them back at her house arguing, screaming at her like it was the end of the world. I could see her spitting back that she wasn't a kid anymore and that she could do and date who she wanted. In the days thereafter they'd have a chance to take steps to keep her away from guys like Daniel. Maybe they'd take her cell phone away. Maybe they'd take her computer away. Maybe they'd give her one massive lecture after another. Maybe they'd send her to live with relatives to keep her out of Danny's reach. Maybe they'd send her to boarding school. I could easily see her being humiliated and hurt if I let the truth of that night get out, but I could also see that it had a much greater chance of making her safe from him.

Down the other path I imagined the results of the lie, where I told the cop that those drugs and alcohol were mine. And the major difference I could see in that scenario was that Daniel would smile at me as he walked out of the station scot-free with sweet, innocent, naïve little her in tow. It occurred to me that he could take her that night if he wanted, as soon as they got far enough away. And alone there in the dark with only him there was little she could do to stop it.

I looked back at her. Her face...

She appealed to my pity with that look on her face.

"Honey," I said, looking her right in the eye. "Get away from this guy as fast as you can."

Her jaw dropped right down to the floor.

"And a knife," I continued.

She drew back from me slightly, and her eyes went wide. But I thought it was worth it to mention.

"As your friend, I suggest you start packing a knife."

Daniel swore at me so loudly that one of the cops in the other room yelled at him to shut up. Even after he did, he leaned in close and spat insults at me much like a cobra spits its venom.

"You think you're so fucking better than me? You and that fucking Prius of yours? Or maybe it's that you haven't gotten into a girl's vagina since the day you came out of one."

The girl looked at him then. I couldn't see the face she looked at him with, but I will give her some credit. After hearing about my complete lack of sexual experience she looked at him, not at me. Daniel didn't seem to have noticed.

"Rob, if you rat on us I'm gonna find that house you live in and burn it the fuck down! You hear me! I'm gonna fucking tear your throat out! You fucking rat!" he hissed.

The girl had started crying, sobbing. Daniel didn't seem to notice.

The cop came back in.

"You, come with me," he ordered.

I stood up and followed him.

"Rob?" I heard my former friend say, "Robert!" he yelled as the door slammed shut.

About twenty minutes later I was sitting in the interrogation room feeling good for the first time that night, and I'd told the cop everything, everything from start to finish. I didn't care what Daniel thought anymore, or any other lowlife for that matter. See, lowlifes are great friends when things are going good for you and you can give them something like a ride, a drink, a joint, or whatever. But the minute things get bad they run like squirrels and even try to get you to cover for them when they do, no matter how much extra it'll cost you. I can see every lowlife on the planet

hating me for saying that and for spilling my guts to a cop, which is a big time lowlife no-no. But I can also see that same fine batch of folks getting a fourteen-year-old girl drunk in order to get into her pants, and I could give a shit less what they think.

"Ok, let's go through this again," said the cop. I nodded.

"Your friend brought the alcohol and the weed for the purposes of giving them to a minor."

"Yes," I answered.

"And he gave them to her in order to have sex with her."

"Yes."

"And you knew this?"

"I knew about the booze. Not about the weed."

"Ok. Can I ask you something else?"

"Yeah."

"Why are you coming forward with this? I mean, we didn't know that the guy was trying to have sex with her, but with your statement that ups the charge. And you're going down for this too," he added, pointing at me. "The fact that you knew that he was trying to have sex with her means that you're accountable too. You do know that."

I slumped a little in my chair, "Yeah," I sighed. "But I'm trying..." I paused, I was collecting my thoughts. "I'm trying to own up to what I did. Guys shouldn't...have sex with...fourteen-year-old girls, especially after getting them drunk."

I said it haltingly, quietly, with much looking down at my hands and back up to his eyes as I said it. But less important I think than the manner in which it was said was fact that it was I who said it.

The cop studied me for a moment then nodded at me.

"You seem like a real stand-up guy, man. You know that?"

I smiled back, "Yes, sir. Yes, I do."



Greg Nasca, "Untitled," Conte Crayon
First appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2008.

Refuge

by Tricia Reinhart (Earnshaw)

"Refuge first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2006.

In the background the ocean melts
As the sun sets on the horizon.
It casts its fiery show of
Flaming rays across the rippling
Points of the water, concluding
The trials of the day. And I

Find myself in your arms.
We lean against the damp
Railing of the beach house
And watch the rigorous crash
Of the waves fall to the sand
Beneath the foam. And I

Feel secure for the moment.
The chill of the evening washes
Over us and you pull me closer.
I feel your wet breath against
My ear, soft as a whisper.
The darkness of the new

Night sweeps over the house
And then over us, the heat
Of the distant sun leaves us
In shadows. But, just for the
Moment, in the affection of
Your arms, I am protected.

My Friend

by Megan Shea

"My Friend" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2006.

Your body is the color of the sky
Before a storm, and the calm
Of the pristine blue ocean
Enhances your peaceful nature.
The squeaking of your
Voice is like a laugh
That goes on forever. When
You open your mouth,
All I can picture is a smile ear to ear.

Beneath it all,
You are intelligent
And friendly, willing
To fly through the air
As you show off your tricks.
The waves that come crashing
Up and down from all the
Splashing are pure enjoyment.

If I could travel
The ocean on your back,
I would; swim beneath the
Surface of the fresh salt water
With you and the schools of fish,
I would; see the beautiful
Sights on the sandy bottom with you, I would.
I can see them now, the multicolor seashells
And coral of all different heights
And shapes. They are as perfect as you.

I'd hold on to your pointed fin
And start an adventure, if I could;
Enjoy a ride with the sun streaming down
On our backs, or the moon illuminating
A path for our destination.



Courtney DiBiasio, "For Mom," Mixed Media Artist's Book

Sunday Dinner

by Jeffrey Redding

There's no day I love to be home more than Sundays. My mom's homemade tomato gravy is the best there is. I wake up about 10:30 every Sunday to the zesty aroma of the gravy cooking on low as the steam eludes the kitchen, travels slowly up the stairs and into my bedroom. Mixed with the smell of gravy is the musical talent of Frank Sinatra being played throughout the house. I throw on shorts to go downstairs, where you will see my mom adding the meatballs, sausage, ribs, and steak to the gravy for more flavor and food to eat. This has been a Sunday ritual since my great-grandfather and his family moved to America from Italy and he was a kid like me with his mom always making the gravy.

Dinner usually isn't ready until about 2:30 p.m., so the amazing smell torments my brother, father, and me until it is time to eat. I always get dressed to go out before the food is ready because my mom always asks me to go to Luberto's bakery and pick up a fresh loaf of Italian bread, which may be the greatest bread in the world when it's fresh and dipped into the pot of gravy. When I get home with the bread, we all sit at the dinner

table set by my mom who always makes it look like one of DaVinci's paintings. On the table are four plates, four forks, four knives, four glasses, four napkins, the loaf of bread, a bowl of black olives, a jug of water for me, my mom's Pellegrino water, a bottle of Snapple for my brother, the jug of milk for my dad, a platter full of gravy and meat, and the grated cheese. The food is so good that every bite is like a bite of heaven.

My dog also loves Sundays because she knows my mom will feed her the leftover meatballs; little does she know I'm sneaking her bites under the table. I can never go without seconds when my mom cooks the gravy, whether it's more pasta or gravy. When everyone is finished, we clean up the kitchen together to make it easier on my mom after she has spent all morning preparing us such a great meal. My mom and dad clean the table and wash the dishes as my brother and I take out the garbage, sweep, and clean the countertops. Once we are finished cleaning, we all go our separate ways until we become a family again on Sunday and eat the greatest delicacy ever made: my mom's gravy.

3 A.M.

by Amy Coyle

"3 A.M." first appeared in Curry Arts Journal in 1995.

3 A.M. rolls around and things are still going strong. People are everywhere, doing everything. Music is hammering through every window, pounding through floors, walls, and doors, with bass loud enough to make your whole body vibrate. Laughter echoes in from outside and there are a few particularly loud people screaming in the distance. They are too far away to make out words, but the tone of their excited screams is enough to let you know that they are having a good time. It makes people wish that they were outside, part of whatever it is that's going on.

There's a small huddle of girls in the bathroom exchanging vital information. "So, what do you think about Jason?" one of them asks as she looks at herself sideways in the mirror, pulling at her blouse.

"I think you've had too much to drink," another replies as she leans her face in toward the mirror to make sure her lipstick is even. The others move around like battery-operated mannequins, posing themselves at the reflections in the mirror: a cross between a Newbury Street window display and a blue jean commercial.

A couple of guys are running around a corner, slamming each other into the walls in a heated game of indoor soccer. They almost trip over the girl sitting in the hallway, talking on the phone. She pulls the telephone towards her on cue, without taking an extra breath or split-second away from her conversation. An intense basketball game is going on out back. In between songs, you can hear the ball bouncing off the pavement.

If you stand in front of this building, all of the sounds mingle together and drift outward. The energy seeps out through all the cracks and you can almost feel the ground shaking. There are no cars driving by, no next door neighbors. Just the trees that haven't started to change color yet, moving back and forth slowly, like night watchmen. The earth and sky seem to be there only to hold up and watch over this building; this building that is bending at the sides to hold hundreds of 18-20 year old strangers—all looking for the same thing. In this contradiction of chaos and peace, you can smell the energy of youth.

There are a few new people sitting in a room.

This is their first time away from home and they still don't know what to think. The room is lit up like an electric minefield. The television is on in the corner with the sound turned down—the only thing that comes in right now is paid commercials. Dion Warwick and her psychic friends look like bad mimes as they chat about the future, while the D.J. talks on the radio. The people in this room listen to the college radio station, not because they particularly like the music, but because they're freshmen and they think it's the thing to do.

Next to the stereo, the computer is still on from the paper that was abandoned hours ago—the screen saver shoots fireworks and explodes in bright colors. The answering machine under the window shines its bright red light, waiting for phone calls—waiting for someone to respond to the carefully constructed message that took an hour to create perfectly. The microwave radiates for a few minutes to prepare a healthy bag of popcorn, the perfect snack at 3 A.M. for a college freshman. All other possible lights are on and they sit on the floor, playing cards, joking about what their parents would do if they spent a Friday night here. They don't consider that their parents were young once, too, and they could have been the particularly loud people in the distance or the ones running around the corner.

At the end of the hall, there is a bunch that just got back from a party. They fly up over the top of the staircase and fall over each other. They roll around on the floor, laughing like crazed hyenas. Out of their madness crawls one pale girl who mumbles something about, "never doing this again."

"Uh-oh," says another as she crawls behind her. She tries to help her friend to the bathroom, because she has been there before and knows how much of a comfort it is to have someone rub your back and hold your hair out of the way as you lose all the cheap keg beer you drank. The rest of the group decides that they will crawl, too, and leave in the direction of where their rooms might be.

Because they all live on the same floor, there are about five or six beer-soaked college students on their knees in front of their doors, struggling with keys. As they fall into bed, they realize that they drank too much also, not only because the room is spinning, but because their heads are already pounding. Little do they know that it's just the bass in the music from upstairs.

The room with the music looks like an overloaded elevator. The windows are open but that's not enough to take away the heat or the giant cloud of smoke that is circling the ceiling. They don't seem to notice or care very much, even though they are sweating and squinting. This group has been doing shots all night to see who will last the longest. The room has some new people in it and those who came back for more. Somehow, being there gives them all the feeling that they belong in this place. They talk about something that happened earlier that night as if they were age-old friends talking about memories from years that have passed. They don't seem to notice that their casual talking is actually screaming, just so that they can be heard over the music. A classic song—one that everyone knows the words to—comes on and they start to sing and sway in unison. "YES THEY'RE SHARING A DRINK THEY CALL LONELINESS. BUT IT'S BETTER THAN DRINKIN' ALONE... SING US A SONG, YOU'RE THE PIANO MAN...." They think they sound pretty good.

But the girl next door cringes as the sound penetrates her earplugs. She just made a cup of tea and is sitting down to do some reading for a class. She already tried to sleep, but decided that it's impossible until the party is over. She bangs on the wall to stand her ground, even though she knows that they can't hear her. "Lunatics," she says to herself. She can't understand why people insist on partying night after night. She starts to read but can't concentrate and throws the book at the wall. "I'll bet they heard that one." She turns on the fan to drown out the noise, pushes her

earplugs in even further, and takes another shot at sleep. At least she knows that they will sleep most of the next day, and she can get some studying done then. She'll be damned if she doesn't get a 4.0 this semester. She starts to drift off to sleep, sure that she is the only person in this place who isn't a maniac.

But she is wrong. Two doors down (on the other side of the loud room) there is a girl crying in the dark by her window. She is a freshman and she really hasn't made any friends yet, because she is so scared and shy. She listens to the music and people singing next door and thinks that she'll go over and ask for a fork or something—in hopes that she'll be invited into their "circle." She wrote a letter to her best friend from home earlier, and she holds it in her hands. The ink starts to run from the tears that she has gotten all over it. But that doesn't matter; she knows what she wrote:

"Hey, what's up? Well, sorry it has taken me so long to write, but I have been really busy. I was supposed to go to this party tonight with some people on my floor, but I figured I should take at least one night to stay in, ya know? So, anyway, everything is great with me—you should have come. You would love it here, tons of parties and cute guys. I have a million stories to tell you, but I'll have to write back, someone's at my door."

She is lost and lonely beyond words and doesn't have the courage to try and change anything. She lies to herself, believing that she does try to fit in and this was some horrible fate cast upon her that she can't do anything about. Nevertheless, she cries herself to sleep every night, waiting for someone to find her.

But the people in their room below her would be her friends. They would never judge anyone—they just wish that everyone could experience what they feel right now. The lights are off, except for the illuminated blue lava lamp in the corner and the black light that reflects off of velvet posters and the mural they painted earlier in Tide. They light another stick of incense, just

in case. They got stoned and watched *The Doors* for two hours. Now that the movie is over, they smoke a little more and listen to Pink Floyd.

"Wouldn't it be great if you could just lay here and watch your own funeral procession? But ya know, not be dead? I mean, imagine if you saw everyone that you have ever met in your life walk by, starting with people you said "hi" to or met at a party and, like, people behind the counter at McDonalds. And when they walk by you just know exactly what they thought of you in that moment they saw you. And then you see people you kind of knew, then people you dated, then your friends, all the way up to your parents?"

"Wow, that sounds pretty cool." They sit around and talk like this for hours and think that they sound like the greatest philosophers of all time.

One thing they all know for sure: tomorrow night at 3 A.M., the scene will be the same.



Nick Barber, "The Who," Digital Print

Nightmusic

by Sara Letourneau

Wind flows through tree limbs,
a river of air brushing
past needles and leaves.

Crickets chirp and serenade
one another, their songs brief and
monotone, the soothing bird songs of dark.

Owl tells his ballad, hooting of
who did this and who did that,
the cadence of his call lighter than rain.

I rarely listen to the night—but don't we all?
So often do we talk and scream
and fill our houses with our own noise

that we also fill our own heads and forget
to turn ourselves off
so we can open the window and listen

to the orchestra playing outside every night.

The Critic and the Muse

by Sara Letourneau

I heard a whisper in the night:
“You must not sing.”
I asked, “Why not?”
and so I sang—
louder than a siren, warbling off-key,
yet the melody chimed like nirvana to my ears.
I sang to an audience of myself
as my heart burst open and filled itself with light.

The sky thundered:
“You must not write.”
I shrugged,
and so I wrote—
filling every page with cross-outs and rhymes,
scripting events from my reel of imagination.
I wrote until my pen ran dry, then reached for another,
knowing a new story begins when the previous one ends.

A scream rang out:
“You must not paint!”
I stood fast
and painted—
speaking the language of color through brushstrokes,
bringing canvas to life, the starry night into dawn.
I painted so the world could see itself,
and when I stepped back to study my work,
I could see my soul.

Then I listened —
and heard only silence.



Jessica Carlvale, "Home Flower," Black and White Photo

Death Warmed Over

by Mark Snyder

"Death Warmed Over" first appeared in the Spring 1973 issue of the Curry Arts Journal. Mark Snyder was one of the Journal's founding editors.

Sad faces limply remind me of past days,
when life pumped through my petrified bones.
The Rabbi tells the sleepy congregation he knew me,
but everyone knows that I never went to Temple.
My father says, "He never was what I expected. In fact,
he was useless, nothing like me."
Grandma says, "He never made me proud, I doubt he ever could have."
She's right, you know.
Sister says, "He treated me like dirt. I'm glad
he's gone."

Won't they be surprised when I pop open the lid
and say,
"You all bored me to death."

The Pen

by Mike Arienti

"The Pen" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2003.

I have lost
the pen
with which I wrote you
a poem

and which
you asked me to
please
return.

I'm sorry for losing it.
I will leave myself a note
to buy another.
May I borrow a pen?

My Cape House

by Kathryn Barry

"My Cape House" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2006.

Crossing the threshold of my youth
I am swathed in the comforting scent of stale mildew.
It has gone unoccupied for months,
my Cape house.

I begin the perpetual ritual of putting things back
where they belong: righting the wrongs of misplaced photos,
amending the homes of my treasured seashells,
properly remaking beds the renters haphazardly threw together.

In the closing stages of restoration
I meander to the backyard
And gaze at the patches of pine needles and ivy
Ruthlessly choking out the ambitious bits of grass
where countless Wiffle balls have been forgotten.

In the distance I hear the lapping waves of Red River Beach
retelling the accounts of a past time.
The surf hums the sounds of vacation
which resonate all through my being.

Inhaling the pungent oceanic aromas
I release all that hinders me from peace of mind.

It is here
where I can just be.



Kaitlynn McNeill, "Summer Bliss," Digital Print, Mixed Media

Untitled

by Mark Snyder

This poem first appeared in the Spring 1973 issue of the Curry Arts Journal.

Time is running short.
Clocks tick away the faster-faster minutes
and my mind explodes in a volcanic eruption
of dates, things and places.
My brain, the acting file cabinet,
is locked and I can't find the key.
Help me straighten out this mess,
by the way, what's your name & address?



Ashley Buckley, "Over the Years," Digital Print, Mixed Media

100% **Organic** and **Non-GMO** Certified

Tide's Turn

by Nancy Garrison

"Tide's Turn" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 1994

Few within that charmed company would have understood why I hated Jenny, but I loathed her with the considerable venom of a brooding thirteen-year-old, for Jenny had seduced my father.

Not sexually of course; nothing so over as that, although there were undercurrents of feeling which I could not then comprehend. But in an important sense, and in a milieu which we both understood, Jenny had bested me in the manner of women, eyes steady, mano a mano, in an atmosphere of competitiveness which we had absorbed from earliest childhood.

The circle in which her family and mine revolved during the nineteen-thirties and -forties focused their lives, as their nineties counterpart still do, upon and around the Nawansett Yacht Club. Sailing was their passion, old or young, and racing was its consummation. Long summers were spent discussing it: training crews, readying boats, plotting the cut of a jib, the balloon of a spinnaker, the relative efficiency of one mainsail against another—and above all the tactics of winning with off-hand sportiveness which effectively sheathed the honed blade of fierce competition. A well-bred fiction prevailed which championed the spor-

rather than the winner.

The Nowansett Yacht Club sits compactly, snuggled back into the northwest curve of the harbor's edge, looking straight ahead at its sheltering craft within a protected basin. On its left is a small pebbled beach which, in the days before fiberglass bottoms, afforded yachtsmen a convenient venue for hauling and scraping the fouled underpinnings of their racing boards of weed and barnacle. To the right of the clubhouse is a shallow creek and overhanging marsh, its high water level falling barely below the small parking area so that on a full moon tide both beach and marsh are inundated and the tires of members' cars are lapped with a flotsam of eel grass.

The clubhouse crouches on sturdy pilings well above the flood tide mark, its sloping roof and long gables seeming disproportionately large in the spare shingle style so beloved by Brahmin Yankees at the century's turn. A single "eye" window studies the harbor unblinkingly from beneath its curved eave and two flagpoles rise decorously from either corner of the porch flying the American flag and the triangle club ensign. Each summer evening as the sunset gun is fired and

the Captain strikes the colors, members rise and observe silence for a long moment as the bright descending flags whip restlessly and the brass cannon's echo reverberates on the water and fades against the granite steadfastness of the breakwater. In this brief seafaring ceremony the daily illusion is perpetuated of shipmates bound together, conjoined and isolated on their vessel of privilege, a select company upon a charmed voyage.

The Yacht Club's atmosphere and essential character are defined by an ethic of coldwater simplicity, and although the substantial Bostonians who made up its charter membership could not have been called humorless, yet they enjoyed their sport with a certain seriousness. Visiting yachtsmen from the less spartan enclaves of Edgartown or Marblehead have frequently been taken aback by its austerity as they row ashore from their guest moorings. The clubhouse contains no restaurant or snack bar; not even a vending machine. Liquor was for many years forbidden on the premises, even at summer dances, inviting ingenious arrangements in automobiles since prohibition days. This stricture has been only recently relaxed by a relenting House Committee and an occasional four-hour license from the Town Fathers.

In its general air of sobriety the club conforms with its setting. Nowansett Harbor is a small one. The channel, which is narrow, demands periodic dredging, and at low water must be navigated with knowing precision. For even the smallest boats under sail it necessitates, in certain wind conditions, consummate skill to avoid running aground. This caveat has shaped, over the years, certain requisite standards for the sailors and lobstermen who daily use this channel. They are a terse and agile brotherhood, at once laconic and good-humored, who will courteously rally to tow a stranger gone aground yet at the same time relish the inaccessibility of their harbor and their own nonchalance in regularly negotiating its approach.

Within such a freemasonry, where the emphasis is unequivocally upon sailing, there is a cheerful but nonetheless rigorous acculturation of its youngest members. Jenny was a graceful

extension of this hearty tradition, the very sum of its expectations. Just my age, smiling, wholesome and what is today described as perky, she was as well a formidable sailor. At the age of five she skippered her own Rookie, capsizing it merrily and then setting it straight with great good humor to continue sailing it until dinnertime. By the time she was nine she had her own Herreshoff twelve-footer and the summer she turned thirteen she was racing 110s.

I did not pay much attention to Jenny in those earliest years because she was a "summer person" whose family came down from Boston to their rambling house on Jericho Road only when the sailing season began. During the winter she went to school in Brookline. I was a "year rounder" who lived in Nowansett and went to school there, a shade of difference which held an ineffable significance.

Like Jenny, I had been started on sailing very early because it was my father's obsession. Our paths diverged, however, some time after we launched and routinely overturned our first Rookies; an exercise designed with the hope—vain in my case—of our acquiring "sea legs." I thought then as I do now that capsizing Rookies was a stupid pastime. They were uncomfortably hard, damp little bathtubs whipped about by the wind, demanding constant attention to keep afloat. In order to navigate it was necessary to hold the tiller and main sheet in one hand and operate the creaky little centerboard with the other. Not surprisingly they are no longer used to initiate young children.

What I did enjoy was sailing with my father in his sleek Manchester 17 on a mild day with a gentle southeast breeze, lazily trolling for mackerel and talking. I loved the exceptional days when my mother put up a picnic for us of cold chicken and deviled eggs and baked bean sandwiches with the crusts cut off—a family favorite—and my father would pour me a small paper cup full of his Ballantine's ale which was kept cool below in the bilge. I can still taste the faint bitterness of its bubbles and savor the kinship of drinking this adult treat, we two together. But these were rare

occasions. For the most part my father was all business when afloat. He was a fierce competitor who preferred a stern course and a stiff breeze to casual drifting and fishing, who barked orders at a step-lively crew of one—and in that capacity I was not invited to serve. I remember him as a sincerely gracious sport when he had lost a race, yet the fact that he was a nearly perpetual winner surely contributed to his *bonhomie*.

And so perversely I abandoned serious sailing beyond the Rookie experience, gradually becoming bookish rather than athletic and professed boredom with the Yacht Club life. This sadly aggrieved my father. He felt there was something malcontent about a girl who preferred reading in a hammock to racing, and sketching pictures of boats to sailing them. The summer that I read *Jane Eyre*, *Gone with the Wind*, and *Wuthering Heights*—an orgy of discovery which, while in its throes, left me groggy and oblivious to all else—saw my rebellion solidified. It was 1942 and I was twelve years old. My father was Commodore that year, a position of honor, and he was ashamed to have bred such a misfit. On Labor Day at the annual Chowder Party which marked the official finish of the sailing season, he presided with genial grace presenting the Club's polished challenge trophies with words of encouragement to competitive youngsters who had accomplished yachting feats in the best tradition, while I sat far back in the crowd munching oyster crackers and pretending not to care. Like all rebels I was sorely torn between following my own way and conforming to curry favor. I adored my father, but I would not follow his passion simply because it was his; and so I was sulky and defensive as mavericks always are, and as school began and fall evenings darkened, the tension at our dinner table became palpable and the air often heavy with suppressed resentment.

In New England's yachting communities of 1943 the rebirth of April found aficionados stripping paint, caulking teak decks and scraping spars as usual, and in that atmosphere of awakening Jenny presented herself to my father and to me in a new dimension. As friends worked at Osborne's

Boatyard separately and together, families each intent upon their own boat's needs, trading varnish lore and sandpaper secrets, it was clear that the makeup of our group had undergone a striking sea change: there were no longer young men among us. As summer advanced this dearth asserted itself in terms of racing, and Jenny, the prodigy, gradually took over as crew for my father in the highly competitive Saturday series and the scarcely less intense Sunday meetings. As a team they became invincible—the Commodore and his daughterly crew.

During the next two years I lived drearily with implied comparisons, generally unspoken but tacitly acknowledged. Jenny, who was wholesome, gifted and fun had stepped into the breach to rescue my father's weekends as his young men went off to war. He gave Jenny a beautiful present to commemorate their time of sailing together. It was a little silver loving cup with an engraved message. I have never known what it said.

Not long afterwards wartime austerity canceled the Yacht Club's racing schedule. In 1945 I went away to boarding school and in 1947 to college. Father died quite suddenly during my freshman year. I know he loved me in many ways, and there was a cautious happiness in those last years, yet he never really forgave me for not being the sailor daughter of his heart's core. We lacked the opportunity—or, in our Yankee silence, the will—to resolve this.

For much of my life I have assumed that the bruise I felt when I dwelt upon those wartime Yacht Club summers was the sore chafing of envy and anger toward Jenny. But lately I have come to believe that what I experienced was a gnawing dissatisfaction at myself for being so arbitrary a rebel. The dual forces which characterized my young life were, on the one hand, the lingering need to conform and, on the other, to diverge—not for the sake of divergence as a virtue, but simply because it is the way I am. What I railed against inwardly was my otherness, at the same time knowing and valuing it as I would a rare lens through which my vision takes on a sometime-

clarity which would not, I think, otherwise exist. Yet some part of me still hankers to be a bona fide member of that secure sunset-gun ship's company. There is a far self within who still is one of them and who judges by their standards the contrary girl who was welcome in a select league, but instead turned sulkily away. At last this has come to bother me less and less. The angst I felt was that of an alien, though alien by my own choice.

Father would say I have steered a risky directional course, tacked my way out of the flotilla, willfully sacrificed the enveloping comfort of fellow travelers. Yet would he? Conceivably I have misjudged him. After all, we could not really have known each other. My sadness is that we were never adults together.

A charismatic man of great charm and humor in whom introspection had never been encouraged or developed, my father was above all a creature of action engaged in the sport which was his life's passion. A conscientious man and loving parent in a generation not noted for the empathetic fathering of daughters, he can be forgiven his exasperation at what must have seemed to him the inexplicably perverse withdrawal of a moody adolescent from the world he valued and loved.

Jenny lives in Palm Springs now. She comes to Nowansett for a month or two each summer to sail and play golf. We're cordial when we meet at the occasional cocktail party even when she tells me again—as she seems compelled to do—that her dearest possession is the memento my father gave her a long time ago. She is a pleasant woman whose days are encompassed by a circling of social sports, her face tan and lined from a life spent in their sunlit pursuit.

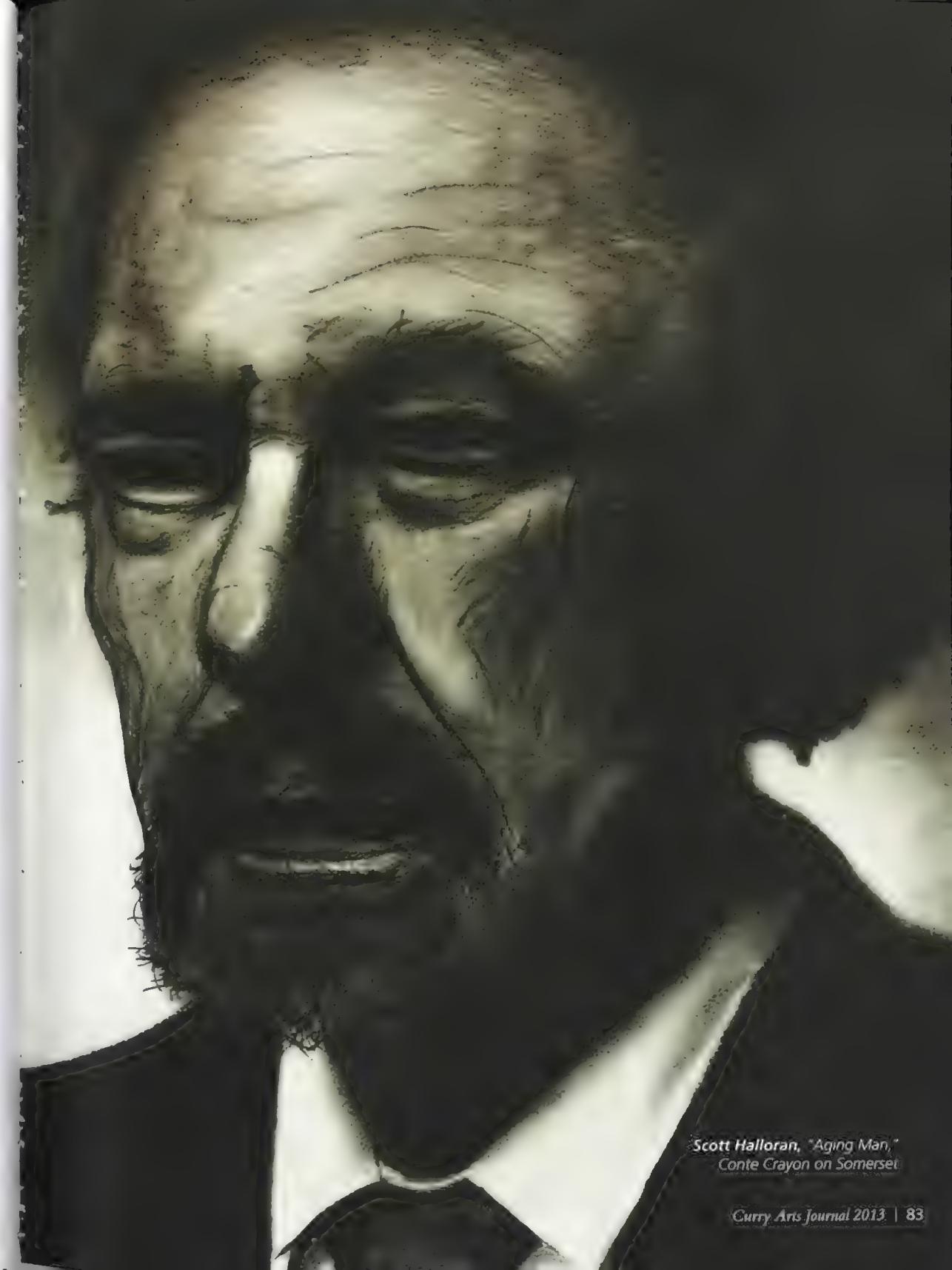
Recently I was asked to present the memorial trophy which wears my father's name to the young sailor who best exemplifies the kinds of sporting values he so fervently championed. At this annual Chowder Party the present Commodore wished also that I would speak a little about Father and about my memories of the Yacht Club fifty years ago in this, its centennial season.

The friends my family knew then are dispersed

to warmer latitudes or have died, but none ever relinquished their deep love of Nowansett. A succession of new sailors have flourished and faded since the sharp sweet summers of my rebellion. The clubhouse remains changeless in its defiance of time. Fashions in boats have altered: the 210 has replaced the Manchester 17 as a favored racing vehicle, but the ascetic absence of such amenities as dining rooms and tennis courts still prevails.

I stood very straight in front of the members gathered on this important day in the big plain room I remember so well with its silver cups and Paul Revere bowls burnished and glancing on the trophy table, and I said respectful words about my father's record as a yachtsman and a Commodore. I retold one or two of the self-deprecatingly funny tales that he loved to tell about himself with, I hoped, an echo of his wit. As the September sun dazzled on the harbor beyond the windows and the boats nodded at their moorings, bows into the wind, I saw again the young sailors who had crewed for Father: one sunk by a Kamikaze at the battle of the Coral Sea, another lost on submarine duty in the North Atlantic. There were only a handful of my contemporaries in the crowd, and none of my parents' generation, but I exchanged smiling clear-eyed contact with one tanned face and said how dearly my father had loved sailing with Jenny Lawrence Potter in the years before his death.

You find yourself doing things you once thought impossible. I never even trembled. Somewhere along the shore of years a tide had turned and anger was washed away. Above the stillness of courteously intent members I could hear the slapping of halyards against the twin steel flagpoles and catch a glint of brass cannon—and for those minutes I recognized silently the process which leads through rebellion to an identity not dependent on any group, and felt jubilantly the reconciliation of an otherness which can yet, from time to time, still find itself within the pale.



Scott Halloran, "Aging Man,"
Conte Crayon on Somerset

Arlington

by Jonathan Reinhart

"Arlington" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2003.

It must be the flag
draping over his body,
covering the coffin with signs
Of embroidered patriotism;

the flag drawn off the casket,
folded with honors in memory
of his life and valorous deeds,
while his wife releases a torrent of tears.

The bugle mournfully sounds retreat,
playing the dreaded Taps,
sending emotion-soaked sounds
into the essence of memory.

The uniforms stand at attention;
they aim, they fire, they reload;
they aim, they fire, they reload.
Up into the sky, bullets soar with his soul.

The Leaf

by Tina Gaynor (Mahoney Maxwell)

"The Leaf" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 1994.

It is one of many in its place
but each is different,
with many colors hiding what
is beneath.

The long cold nights surround
this delicate leaf.
Its innocence doesn't know
what the warm sun has hidden.
Soon the warmth is taken away.
Torn from its safety,
in a cold harsh way,
from that place that held it close
and let life into its veins.
Pulled by the wind,
to drift away,
to a place where it will lie
among other leaves
with the same fate.
To lose its shield of colors
and become like them.



Ashley Ackerman, "Stone Garden," Glazed Stoneware

Autumn Fields

by Richard Guerra

"Autumn Fields" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2011.

There is no suffering, grieving, or pain
in these autumn fields; there is no pity or shame
I touch with my fingers the cold tingling strands
like the wings of a bird flowing with the land

There's no need to cry or to ache or to weep
There's life in the wind and there's plenty of sleep
With each new drawn breath the breeze seems to heal
With each new shed feather I can once again feel

Though the smell of the air brings tears to the eye
just touching the grass makes the sadness run dry
People say that for some the grass never greens
but here in the sun there's no knowing what that means

And the patterns of whistling tangles of shine
blow away all the sorrows that twirl up like twine
All the glitter in the sky can be seen in the span
All the love in one heart can be felt with one hand

And there's nothing more lovely
Than the warmth from above me
And the sound of the air as it rotates the leaves
All the weight of my body's offloaded
All the fears that can fly have now floated

The Dance Studio

by Nicole Asselin

"The Dance Studio" first appeared in Curry Arts Journal 2002.

Rows of sleepy-faced girls file in
through the door like columns of pink
and black ants, their new pink ballet shoes
squeaking on the polished hardwood floors as
they line up at the barre.

The barre is cold and shocks their
warm inviting hands.
"Bend and stretch
plie and releve,"
the teacher calls out while the piano
plays a soft, lilting melody
punctuating each precise movement
of the bending legs.

The mirrors glint in
the morning sun
that's streaming through
the windows as the
dancers twist and turn
through the sunbeams
like flowers swaying in the breeze.

Hour after hour,
day after day, week after week,
the rhythm and the practice
of "plie, releve"
are the heart
of dance,
home away from home,
the studio.

The Body of Belly Dance

by Brittany Capozzi (BellaBianca)

Crisscrossing one foot over the other,
My soles search for the pulse in the ground
Calling for the current.

Once the pulse and I touch
My hips wheel themselves,
Recycle the oxygen,
The breath
Of movement.

I stop breathing to
Flutter my stomach,
Pumping muscles
Of strength that
Reawaken my
Core.

With rising energy
My chest lifts from side to side,
Defying gravity
And any burdens.

Slowly
Rotating shoulders
Forward and back,
My dormant patience
Now actively balances itself.

Feeling patience, my eyes
Circle the room
Like hands on a clock,
Taking the time to
See the moment.

The undulating veil,
Outlines tear drops,
Extending the dance
Into the air.

I level to the floor,
Extending
And surrendering my body
As art imprints itself
Back to where the pulse came from.



Emily Shvarts, "My Digital Print," Digital Print, Mixed Media

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